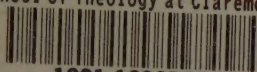


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The Birth and Growth of Toleration and Other Essays



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The Birth and Growth of Toleration



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History

The Birth and Growth of Toleration

By the

Rev. J. O. Bevan

M.A., F.G.S., Assoc. Inst. C.E., F.S.A.
Sometime Prizeman, Exhibitioner, and Foundation
Scholar of Emmanuel College, Cantab.
Rector of Chillenden, Dover

*Insert in
Preaching*

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PREFACE

THE Essays constituting this volume have been composed during the intervals of a busy life, being originally delivered to various gatherings of laity and clergy.

The series is now gathered together, and published in accordance with a desire expressed in various quarters.

The Articles mainly fall into four divisions: (i) those dealing with Comparative History; (ii) those relating to problems concerning the rationalization of Miracle; (iii) those addressed mainly *ad clerum*; (iv) those of a general character, affecting the community at large.

The author has endeavoured to treat these various matters in a broad and tolerant spirit.

This may be illustrated in respect of the question of the keeping of Sunday. In relation to this perennial controversy, there is presented to us an instance where disputants frequently leave out of account important considerations bearing: (i) on the interpretation given, and the relative importance attached, in the present

Preface

day, to deliverances of the Scriptures on a cognate subject, viz., the Sabbath ; (ii) on the cosmopolitan character of existing English society ; (iii) on the respect therefore due to the tone of thought prevalent in circles and communities other than our own, composed, for instance, of Jews and Romanists. Both of these bodies have well-marked laws and conventions as to their holy day ; their consciences not being offended so long as those laws and conventions are respected and maintained amongst themselves. Thus, the "Continental Sunday" must largely be judged, not by our insular rule and prejudice, but in relation to the primary obligations laid down by the Church and Society then and there existing in the particular country involved.

Again, in the Article on Discipline, the writer recognizes the crumbling down of many of the old defences in Church and State, and the loosening of the bonds of allegiance to canons and authorities, to which unquestioning obedience was rendered in the past. Therefore, he would suggest the attribution to the Church of England of a claim and position which should be capable of definition as to its force and limits, and which should constitute her an effective authority in respect of faith and morals.

In order thus to furnish a centre of unity to her sons, to separatists from her body, and to the

Preface

various branches of the Catholic Communion throughout the world, our Church should come forth boldly as the witness, keeper, and interpreter of Holy Writ ; and as empowered to make and administer all laws necessary for the regulation of the lives of her members ; but—as at the present time—where each man speaks for himself, who shall hear ?

In accordance with the spirit and leading of Evolution and Development, the position would need to be periodically adjusted, so that the conservatism and inertia of an ancient institution should not be permitted to check or constrain legitimate growth.

The author is conscious of the numerous imperfections and deficiencies of this compilation, which are partly due to the tentative nature of the methods employed. Moreover, he apologizes for the outspokenness of some passages therein ; but he has endeavoured to speak his mind freely, even at the risk of shocking weaker brethren. In many respects, the times in which we live are critical.

He has long been convinced that the traditional modes of regarding the origin and development of religion and philosophy in general require to be modified in accordance with the growth of ideas naturally progressing with the growth and progress of the world-spirit, with improved methods

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of analysis and reasoning, and with the amelioration of the temper of debate and controversy.

He believes that the time has arrived for the overhauling and revision of existing beliefs and conclusions in every department of knowledge—above all, in the region of that moral sphere which must ever be of supreme interest and import to mankind; whereby the teaching and practice of Religion may be relieved of much that hampers it, and that impedes its acceptance and universal diffusion.

This can be done only in accordance with the unfettered use of scientific methods of inquiry and analysis; whereby Tradition, Authority, and Preconception may be tested and set on a true basis, early and persistent error repudiated, and a well-ordered advance guaranteed.

As a result of this lightening of our craft, and the simplification of our precept and practice, there might naturally be expected to follow the drawing together of differing bodies of religionists, and the inclusion within the fold of a large proportion of Agnostics and unbelievers who now scruple at certain details of the faith, and at the spirit in which those details are presented and defended.

True it is that a new centre of comprehension cannot be found without temporary disturbance; but, on the other hand, it will not be maintained

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that the existing state of affairs is satisfactory. The present is, by no means, a time of peace or surety; but (in respect of many individuals, both young and old, gentle and simple, learned and ignorant) of doubt and distress, of secret questioning, of conventionalism, of forced submission, even of hypocrisy and falling away.

A great responsibility rests on all in authority—statesmen, clergy, parents and teachers alike—indeed, on all Christian and well-meaning folk—to do what in them lies to cause to cease the dry-rot which appears to be setting in and secretly spreading in every direction.

The author acknowledges, with warm thanks, the good offices in respect of the revision of the proofs rendered by the Rev. D. Adamson and the Rev. R. V. Tremills.

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THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF TOLERATION

INTRODUCTION

THE subject involved in our title is of far-reaching importance, seeing that it is susceptible of application at all times ; and under all conditions of social, political, and religious life.

The habit of thought, feeling, and expression we have attained in respect of Toleration or Tolerance, is the result of forces which have been in operation (through ebb and flow) for thousands of years ; forces which men—more or less unconsciously—have sometimes resisted and sometimes submitted to ; forces which are modified, to a greater or less extent, according to the differentia of race and to all that “race” implies ; and also according to the differentia of thought, will, and experience manifested by the individuals constituting the particular race.

What our feeling is in relation to this subject, is of the utmost importance ; for our opinions and practices (to as great an extent as ever) are called into existence and operation because of our conflict with divergencies of opinion within the Christian Church, and with infidelity without its pale.

Birth and Growth of Toleration

Strange to say, the subject of Toleration has been very imperfectly studied and dealt with, even as it has been very imperfectly understood and applied. The literature directly concerned with it is but scanty, and there is no classic and complete history of its genesis and growth ; the reason being that it is a comparatively modern conception and product. Consequently, very hazy notions exist ; our personal action, and the corporate action of the State, being directed more by instinct than by principle.

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SUBJECT

In a brief Essay, it is possible to deal but with the fringe of the subject—in respect of the definition of terms ; of historical survey ; of distinction between the false and the true principle ; of its natural and proper limits. We shall see that Toleration enters into the realm of Politics, Religion, Social Life, Literature, Art, Race, Colour—the ideas interpenetrating the last five divisions having become largely conventionalized.

DEFINITION

Phillips Brooks says by way of definition : “Tolerance is a disposition ; Toleration is the behaviour in which that disposition finds expression. A disposition is to its appropriate behaviour as a man is to his shadow. The shadow represents the man, but it often misrepresents him. It is larger than he is, or smaller.”

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In other words, Tolerance is the allowance of opinions and of practices contrary to those which our own convictions lead us to entertain and carry out; it is, in fact, an allowance of that which is disapproved. The subject-matter with which Tolerance is concerned is man's attitude towards the opinions of his fellow-men. It is, therefore, the mean or middle state in which virtue consists—*persecution* being the excess, *indifference* the defect, of this quality. The attitude of the persecutor is clear—he wishes to impose his own opinions on all his fellow-men. The attitude of the indifferent man is also clear—he has no opinions, and therefore is heedless. Characteristically Mr. Balfour says: "Toleration is one of the most valuable empirical maxims of modern politics." The virtue of the tolerant man lies in having opinions, but not wishing to impose them by any external pressure, or to enforce them by any means save temperate argument.

HISTORICAL

The ideas of the Ancients were very different from ours in respect of themselves, of the relation of one class to another, of the relation of the State to other States whether in peace and war. In common life and politics alike, they thought that what was good for others was bad for themselves, and *vice versa*. Again, few of us have fully realized the fundamental difference between the conceptions of the State or of the

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Church entertained of old time, and by men of our day.

First, a few words about the great empires of the world. In respect of the Greeks and Romans, the system of polytheism—howsoever it arose, whatsoever it portended—made for Toleration. When the State, by way of conquest, took over any country, it installed the gods of that country in its Pantheon. Doubtless, certain states and cities had tutelary deities—such as Pallas at Athens, Artemis at Ephesus—concerning whose honour the inhabitants were exceeding jealous; yet this devotion did not prevent their rendering to other deities due respect. Even in late times, there were certain “illicit religions”—amongst which Christianity ranked in the period of its early struggles, until its purpose was fully declared of sweeping away all religions and all gods save One.

GREECE

The ancient conception of the State (as a community within which could be carried on all the functions of civilized life) accepted man as he was, recognized the operative motives of conduct (limited and personal as they were), and tried to bring them under State control. It was a matter of political expediency that men should, at least, *profess* to hold the same religious opinions. The language of Plato does not materially differ from that of a Grand Inquisitor—“If a person be proven guilty of impiety, not merely from

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childish levity, but of such as grown-up men may be guilty, let him be punished with death " !

ROME

Again, as we have seen, Roman religion was willing to make a place for every cult which could be trusted not to overstep the bounds of political convenience ; but it had its *religiones illicitæ*—Christianity, when it arose, being, in due course, included in the list. The reason for the general principle is clear. The common people regarded these religions as equally true, the philosophers as equally false, and the magistrates as equally useful. But such a man as S. Paul (tolerant though he was) could do no other than preach "Jesus and the Resurrection"—thus proclaiming a God before whom every knee should bow, and every other god should be thrown down. This constituted a novel offence before the law—viz., that of Heresy.

EGYPTIANS, ASSYRIANS, BABYLONIANS, PERSIANS

As to other religions, the conclusion is obvious. The State and the Church were co-terminous ; the monarch was the eldest son of the tribal or State deity ; he was supported by a trained and learned priesthood, fettered by prejudice and tradition, faced by an unlettered and a superstitious people. Conformity was all in all—to go outside the limits of official declaration was death—the free-thinker

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being considered inimical to Church and State alike.

To Asia, primarily, we owe law, religion, civilization, letters, and art. The Babylonians manifested to the world agriculture and commerce ; the Assyrians, the art of conquest ; the Egyptians (partly an Asiatic race and affinity), reverence for life, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the sense of future retribution. Among all these peoples, there prevailed the idea of the existence of many deities ; amongst whom, at different times, and in different places, One—such as Merodach or Ammon—stood prominently forth as chief. Further, we note the idea of the embodiment of the God in the ruling monarch ; finally, the perfect union of the civil and ecclesiastical government to carry out religious observances in all their traditional fullness and in all the various relations of public and private life. (All this was varied by absolutism, war, conquest, defeat.) Herein, there was no such thing as heresy. The prevailing opinion was too strong from above—too weak from below ; all power, learning, and tradition being cast into the support of the dominant system. As yet, Toleration was inconceivable.

JEWS

Dealing with questions of fact, the same might be said of the Jewish polity derived—as it was—from Assyria and Babylonia, and coloured by its connection with Egypt.

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We have dwelt upon these things, to introduce the fact that Abraham and his following (the founders of the Jewish people) came from Chaldea, and would therefore be possessed of the Chaldæan formulæ of religion and worship. The primary conception of the founder of the Jewish polity was of a local or tribal divinity, and this idea would be hard to eradicate.

The history of the Jewish people from Abraham's day shows how difficult it was to extend the idea to a Universal God even under favourable circumstances, and what retrogressions there were.

Again, in the time of Moses—the law-making epoch of the Jewish race—we are reminded of the debt due, on the one hand, to the Chaldæans in respect of such systems of law as that of Khammurabi ; and, on the other, to the Egyptians, for the three root-ideas already mentioned—viz., reverence for life, a looking forward to the resurrection of the body, and a conception of a future retribution—though these were not fully incorporated into the national belief until a period much later than the time of Moses.

In the Jewish polity, there was no place for Toleration. There was no operative system of Law ; therefore, the individual, or the tribe, that had suffered injury, took the law into their own hands and required "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Naturally, every struggle was a matter of life or death—a war of extermination. This alone can be held to justify the destruction of the Canaanites, of the Amalekites,

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the deeds of Jael towards Sisera, Samuel towards Agag, David towards Joab, Elijah towards the Baalites.

The same feeling is reflected in some of the Psalms, the most highly devotional parts of the Jewish record. Witness the imprecations scattered over the page: "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow"; "Blessed shall he be that taketh their children and throweth them against the stones." Nowadays we do not excuse these things—we simply explain them.

NEW TESTAMENT

In considering the record of the New Testament, there must be taken into account: (*a*) the false opinions therein condemned; (*b*) the character of the condemnation; (*c*) the means by which it was applied.

The Gospels contain stern and unsparing denunciations uttered by our Lord against the Pharisees, together with statements of the reasons which led to their utterance. The Pharisees were the religious teachers of the nation, and they discharged their functions in a mode which was pitilessly exposed and criticized. They were judged by the standard they professed to set up, and were convicted of being untrue to their trust, and to the God whose ministers they claimed to be.

Again, the Apostles were entrusted with a message, in the delivery of which they met with

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opposition of various kinds. The grounds of S. Paul's condemnation of sinners are mainly moral ; his censures—in a specific case—being directed against the character of the false teachers whose insincere motives are exposed to view. Again, he is very severe in dealing with what he conceives to be wrong opinions : “ Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.” Whether Anathema refers to Ecclesiastical Excommunication or to the spiritual condemnation of the offender, *ipso facto*, is not material to our purpose.

In respect of the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, Elymas, the Corinthian offender, Hymenæus and Alexander, we have to bear in mind that the Apostles were enjoined and required to exercise discipline amongst the conflicting and incongruous elements of the early Church, whence also Paul directs Timothy and Titus sharply to rebuke malcontents. (1 Tim. v. 20 ; 2 Tim. iv. 2 ; Titus i. 13.)

But it is argued that the language used by the Apostles favours the conception of a rigid orthodoxy admitting of no deviation, and putting out of account as sinful all other opinions. What the Apostles, however, denounce is the incursion of the profligacy of paganism into the assemblies of Christian worshippers. That was the peculiar and crying evil and danger of the time. There was an intense life-and-death struggle on the part of the early teachers of the new faith, completely

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to wean away their converts from old associations, and to preserve that purity of doctrine, which should exhibit purity of thought, act, and life as essential characteristics. Of course, lapses on the part of professors were not unknown, but they were regarded with the utmost horror as treason against the risen and ascended Lord.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Account must also be taken of the growth of the Church as an organized body, and of the discipline which was, consequently, involved. Sometimes, the powers of the Apostles were used and exercised for the punishment of offenders, but (as we have seen) in such cases, the executants were careful to make it clear that their action was declaratory of God's purpose, and therefore was simply ministerial.

There are many forms of sin and error which S. Paul exhorts Timothy to combat, but only one concerning which he would have a penalty enacted. The punishments inflicted by the Apostles, as rulers of the Church, afford no certain precedent for subsequent times ; inasmuch as it was alleged by them that the punishment came from God, and was brought to bear for an offence which was beyond the ken of human judgment. The cases were rare, so that the apostolic intervention was exceptional. We must remember, too, that the early teachers were like sheep in the midst of wolves ; yet that such was the power of the Word and

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Discipline that the members of the flock reached a high degree of purity and devotion.

In those early days, the Church was required to engage in a tremendous struggle against some of the most obstinate and powerful of the world's forces. Its preachers and professors were in a small minority, but there was communicated to them a divine impulse to attack the citadels of prescriptive right, tradition, learning, and wealth ; to contend against hosts of priests and servers swarming about the sacred temples ; to run counter to national and social observances, sports, art, poetry, the drama ; and to oppose themselves to cruel manifestations of prejudice, ignorance, jealousy, and ill-will. They could do no other than pray for Toleration.

ANTE-REFORMATION

On the whole it was an enormous advantage for the Church to absorb the State (A.D. 313) ; yet, from this union, sprang great disadvantages. The State was forward to use the Church to further its own purposes ; whilst, on the other hand, the Church—or, rather, the baser sort of her rulers—utilized the State to bring about her aggrandizement and to minister to her greed ; furthermore, she learned to lean on the secular arm to the exclusion of her own proper moral and spiritual suasion and sanction. Hence, arose Wars, Crusades, Persecutions—such as those of the Waldenses and Albigenses—and all the hateful

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system of the Inquisition directed to the extirpation of "heresy." The doings of the Dominicans in this direction represent the utmost refinement of diabolical cruelty—filling one with loathing and horror. The *idea* was a good one—that of keeping the faith pure ; but the means employed were of the devil. The history of the Christian Church on this side is unspeakably sad, when we read, *e.g.*, of the sufferings of Christians through Christians ; and again of the sufferings of a particular body of men—the Jews—at the hands of Christians, whose founder was a Jew. Even in our own country, from 1290 to 1657, no Jew was permitted to set foot.

As time went on, the Church adapted her system, more and more, to the system of the world ; and when she accepted the responsibility of maintaining order in the community, it was often exercised for political, rather than for religious, ends. It was the love of power, wealth, and influence, for their own sakes, that led to the crusades against the Albigenses and Waldenses ; and in the case of Venice, even against the Eastern Church at Constantinople. It was secular policy that dictated the murder of Jerome and Huss, even as that of Servetus in Geneva in after time—it being the secular power to which these spiritual offenders were delivered.

The main events which indirectly rendered the English Reformation possible were : the destruction of the Roman Empire ; the introduction of Printing ; the use of Gunpowder ; the Wars of the Roses ; the prosecution of Invention and

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Discovery, and the rise of a numerous and flourishing Middle Class.

In the sixteenth century, the Civil and Ecclesiastical Powers were largely autocratic. The unity of the Catholic Church, the authority of the Pope, the obedience of the King and Nation, were alike absolute ; but the extension of learning led to inquiry, doubt, debate, division. When the tongue and the pen became mightier than the sword, minorities were enabled to make themselves heard, and frequently to have the best of the argument—for, be it observed, it is the minority that is usually in the right.

In those days, repression was the last and most potent argument employed. The Act "*De hæretico comburendo*" was passed in 1400, in the reign of Henry IV., and it ran until 1696 ; penal laws were enacted to compel people to attend church—a good thing, but sought to be effected by wrong means. In respect of the Ecclesiastical Authority, the Court of High Commission sought to lord it over the conscience and its outward expression ; this tribunal was abolished in 1641.

Politically, the system of absolutism ; ecclesiastically, the system of the Papacy—logically lead to repression, fanaticism, exclusiveness, intolerance, persecution, and the maintenance of the fires of an Inquisition. In speaking of this Institution, we must however retain our historical sense, and remember that (in the days and countries when and where it was set up) ordinary amusements were brutal even as ordinary punishments

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were cruel. Justice too was halting and erring. It caught but one criminal out of a hundred, so that when it did punish, it paid that criminal out. Again, we have to remember, that whilst burning for heresy was abolished in Spain in 1820, hanging for sheep-stealing was still practised in England. Even so, it is not pleasant to remember that, so late as 1877, Pius IX. defended inquisitorial action—but even popes must sometimes be consistent!

It is, therefore, a matter for no astonishment that Toleration is a thing of comparatively modern growth, and that multitudes, in successive generations, not only ignored it altogether, but felt that they were perfectly within their right in so doing.

Doubtless, it was intended to be an element of religious feeling and practice from the first; yet—we repeat—we cannot say that even God's chosen people appreciated its value or the necessity for its exercise. Thus, from the records of the Bible, we have gathered instances in which a wealth of invective was lavished by the chosen nation against those differing from them, and in which a method of treatment was frequently adopted bordering on savagery. The actions of Saul or of Elijah, *e.g.*, can be defended only on special grounds. Perhaps, some excuse may be made for the Israelites when we consider that they were a people altogether isolated by their faith, their ceremonial, their tradition, and their destiny; but it is a misfortune that any excuse should be necessary.

In return for the treatment of their enemies

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generally, and for the rejection by the Hebrews of Christ's teaching, successive generations of Christians have wrought a bitter revenge; nor has dislike of the Jew, or even his persecution in Christian countries like France, Germany, and Russia, ever ceased. In our own land, too, a well-marked prejudice prevails, which may be inarticulate, but is none the less potent.

This, however, by the way. Narrow as was the creed of the ancient Israelite, that creed was yet broader than the interpretation assigned to it; and its spirit—at all events—evermore bade him love justice and do mercy. Take, *e.g.*, the Psalter, and (putting aside certain expressions in the Imprecatory Psalms) one finds that a true spirit of charity and generosity breathes through the greater part of that wonderful book of devotion.

When we come to the Christian Scriptures the ideal is, at length, reached, and that at its highest point. Christ's Holy Spirit came primarily to convince the world of sin, inasmuch as the spirit which is in us must be pure before it can be peaceable. We are, however, not unmindful of the fact that our Lord, in no measured terms, denounced hypocrisy, and such-like vices, and the men who practised them; but—on the other hand—the whole tenor of His teaching related to the necessity for the meek heart and the quiet spirit. His followers were called upon to love even those who hated them, and to pray for those who spitefully used them.

In His own person He illustrated the force and beauty of His teaching, and approved His own

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exhortations when He said even of His murderers, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do."

At the hands both of Jews and heathens the infant Church suffered grievous things. Persecution after persecution raged, sometimes local and unpremeditated, but sometimes Imperial and carried out with all the authority of a cruel and absolute power.

These things were declared aforehand by the Master and His Apostles, and the earliest examples are set out in the Acts and the Epistles, in respect of those who thus foreshadowed them. Moreover, it is possible to take up certain records preserved in early Christian writings outside the sacred story, and to make ourselves acquainted with the innocence, devotion, and purity of the early martyrs—both men and women—and with the calm and valiant spirit in which they went forth to meet death in the most repulsive forms—at the stake, in the Amphitheatre, or on the cross of shame.

But prosperity brought an access of pride and sloth, and caused primitive faith and love to languish. Heresies and schisms arose, and there is not a more melancholy history than that of the centuries immediately following the victory of the Church over the forces of paganism and heathenism. Quarrels and distresses prevailed. The Lord's commands were forgotten—one sect warred against another—envy, hatred, deceit, and violence prevailed ; mutual respect and tolerance being

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conspicuous by their absence. This state of things persisted during the whole of mediæval times. The history of the Jews at that period—to which we have already briefly adverted—furnishes an illustration. But worse has to be told. What shall we say of the dealings of the dominant Church, as directed against those who differed from her teaching?

One cannot help seeing that this teaching had been developed along lines alien to those laid down by Christ and His Apostles. The monstrous pretensions of the Pope and the priesthood—the travesty of God's mode of dealing with sinners exhibited by the sale of Indulgences—the materialism presented by crude definitions of the Real Presence—cannot be said to have grown naturally out of the teaching of our Lord.

But a sin was wrought against Christian charity and fairness when these developments and interpretations were sought to be commended to men's conscience not by reason, but by force. From this point of view, no Church has been a greater sinner than that which has its seat at Rome. Pride, intolerance, self-sufficiency, corruption, and tyranny have been its distinguishing characteristics—as eventually they will be its ruin.

Without subscribing to every detail of the faith and practice of the victims, we now protest against the spirit in which individuals such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, were dealt with ; and in which communities such as the Albigenses, Waldenses, and Huguenots were persecuted and decimated.

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If lapse of time, and the growth of a better feeling (due to a higher conception of Christian truth and charity) had brought about a change, we might have consented to forget the past ; and, mindful of our own mistakes, to draw the veil of charity over our sister's grievous sins ; but one cannot help seeing that the same bold, bad, domineering spirit is still there, and that it would break forth again to-morrow—even in this our land—if opportunity favoured ; so that even the Inquisition itself would be restored in order to be the instrument wherewith to purge out what would be called heresy, to quench inquiry, and to break the spirit of freedom.

Rome learns no useful lessons—otherwise, her rulers would not fail to notice the sad plight to which she ultimately brings those who thus place themselves beneath the foot of spiritual tyranny.

The Latin nations—with their love of art, colour, poetry, life—are her most obedient servants. Look at them now as compared with the Teutonic—to whose sturdy spirit Protestantism chiefly commends itself. Italy, Portugal, Spain, France—and more remotely—the Spanish and Portuguese elements in Mexico and the South American Republics furnish dreadful examples. Italy is in a condition of national bankruptcy ; the Vatican and France are on irreconcilable terms ; Portugal is a decaying power ; Spain, a few years ago, emerged with sad loss from a conflict into which she entered so unprepared, that the blood of

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her soldiers and sailors, ineffectually slain, cries as from the ground against their rulers and murderers.

France is going along the downward path with rapid steps. Many of her sons are gifted in science, literature, and art—but the men in her large towns are (to say the least) indifferent to religion; the population is stationary from causes which are well known; political stability is lacking; and it would seem that the sense of justice and generosity is diminishing, even whilst the forces of strife and anarchy are gaining ground. As a nation, she seems to be forsaking God; can we be surprised, therefore, that God seems to be forsaking her? If things advance on these lines, at the end of another half century France will be as impotent as Spain.

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND— REFORMATION PERIODS

But to turn to the English people and the English Church. Many crimes in the past may be alleged against both. That the Reformation was a protest—and a successful one—against the avarice and extortion of the Roman Church and the mediæval accretions to primitive Christianity we shall all allow.

The absolute unity of the Church had a fair trial in Western Europe, but the system broke down under its own weight. In England, during the

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transition period, the country exchanged King Log for King Stork—the yoke of the Pope for that of Henry VIII. ; and—owing to the theory and practice of the age in respect of Divine Right and the exercise of the royal prerogative—there was not much to choose between the two.

The different parties within the Church were undoubtedly kept together by the stern hand of the monarch ; but it was soon evident that forces were in operation which tended to an upheaval ; such as the result of the excommunication pronounced against Elizabeth ; the influence exercised by foreign reformers ; the extension of learning, discovery, emigration, and commerce ; the appeal to the Bible, with its diverse interpretations ; the equalizing of religious parties within the State ; the Civil War, which ultimately set these forces in bloody array, the one against the other.

In the days of Elizabeth, internal union was felt to be a desideratum—but it was hard to effect. It was the desire of her rulers to establish religious opinion on as broad a basis as was consistent with the maintenance of the essential characteristics of a branch of the Catholic Church. The majority of Englishmen were satisfied ; but ancient sentiment still held some, whilst the New Theology attracted others. Neither body of dissentients wished for Toleration for itself as a permanent solution of the problem. Each wished to impose upon England, universally, its own system. The State regarded such conduct as dangerous, and punished it as unpatriotic. Those who suffered, suffered

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under the laws of the State. The Church made no claim similar to that of Rome to compel all Englishmen to enter her fold.

It was this fact which rendered the question of Toleration possible for discussion. In Roman Catholic countries, persecution hardened into a necessary principle which no man might question. In Protestant countries, it was a matter of national policy. Changes in foreign relationships and the growth of international respect gradually wrought out a basis of common life which was steadfast and secure, independently of the religious opinions of the parties concerned.

The weakest naturally sought for Toleration. It was a long time coming to the birth. Its emergence was largely due to the writings and example of such men as More, *Utopia*, 1518; Erasmus; Luther; Shakespeare, *Sonnet*, lxvi., and certain passages in the *Plays*; John Smyth, *Declaration of Faith*, 1611; Thomas Helwisse, *Religious Peace, or, A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, 1614; *Objections Answered*, 1615; Bacon, *Unity in Religion*, 1625; Henry Robinson, 1644; Roger Williams, of Wales, *Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience*, 1644; The Pilgrim Fathers; Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1644; *True Religion*; Jeremy Taylor, *Liberty of Prophesying*, 1647; Locke, *Letters on Toleration*, 1700; Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, 1779; J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859.

It is saddening to notice that when minorities swell into majorities, they forget the lessons of adversity and become persecutors in their turn.

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This was abundantly evidenced in New England, where Quakers were harried and witches exterminated ; as also in Old England, where Cromwell (who had called back the Jews and abolished the last relics of slavery and the feudal system, yet) inveighed against the Mass, persecuted the English Church, and lifted up his voice and hand against the anointed King. The Commonwealth Parliaments disestablished the Church, drove out the clergy, desecrated the cathedrals, wrought destruction in every parish church, and, under heavy penalties, proscribed the use of the Liturgy.

All these horrors widened the breach between the opposing sections of the English people, intensified opposition and revolt at the time, and laid up bitter memories when the reckoning was over.

Thus, the Restoration caused the pendulum to swing to the other side, a revulsion of feeling taking place, which led to the passing of the Act for Conformity ; the Test Act (not repealed until 1828) ; the Five Mile Act ; and the Conventicle Act. This course of action may be explained, though not excused, by the statement that it was only retributive and " natural."

THE REVOLUTION

After the Revolution, and from time to time, but spasmodically (according as the prospect of the accession of a Roman Catholic prince grew near or far), such ordinances as have been mentioned

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fell into desuetude and were gradually repealed. In this effort at repeal (as was only to be expected) the Church has not taken a forward part, but has been content to accept the position, in the face of recognized facts.

In the present day, most disabilities have disappeared. The public conscience demands that a profession of faith in the doctrine of the Church of England be made by the Sovereign and the Lord Chancellor—otherwise, in respect of the Houses of the Legislature, Jewish and Roman Catholic tests have disappeared—even a Bradlaugh could sit and vote. The same may be said of the Universities, the Public Offices, the Army and Navy, the Judiciary and the Magistracy. Everywhere are Free Thought, Free Speech, Free Expression. All men can think, speak, write, and act when and where and how they please, so long as they sin not against public morality, or openly traduce not the character or reputation of a citizen.

Persecution disappeared because the State became conscious that there was an adequate basis for the maintenance of political society in those principles of right and wrong which were universally recognized by its citizens, apart from their position or belief as members of a religious organization ; in other words, it realized that the State and the Church operated in different spheres, the objective and the subjective ; the realm of act and the realm of feeling ; that they referred to different sanctions, and used different forms of retribution. Therefore, Law no longer

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endeavoured to coerce Conscience, inasmuch as Conscience appealed to a higher tribunal.

Doubtless, many agents whom God employs to bring about a purgation or a reformation, are unworthy ; but even an unworthy instrument can bring about results which He wills to be accomplished.

The sixteenth century would have furnished an excellent field for the exercise of that virtue of Toleration we are discussing ; but it was not so to be. When we consider, at this distance of time, the persistent and successive struggles between Mediævalists and those who favoured the Reformation ; and, then, between Puritans and Episcopalians in the days of Henry VIII., of Elizabeth and their successors, no fact strikes us more than the absence of Toleration as a principle ; not only so, but even of any idea in the minds of the chief actors of the existence of such a virtue, or of the necessity for putting it into exercise.

It was a mere question of POWER—those who had the *might* exercised the *right*. When Roman Catholics were in the ascendancy they harried, persecuted, burned, and slaughtered. When Protestants had the upper hand, they followed the bad example.

Herein, the State arrogated to itself the power to which popes had laid claim—viz., that of exercising full authority over the consciences of men. They utilized not the opportunity to make that authority felt and respected by argument, by

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entreaty, or by friendly and sympathetic insistence (which would have been perfectly just, salutary, and christian); but they filled up their cup to the full by involving the arm of the civil authority in order to coerce, to fine, imprison, and kill.

The evil principle was fully believed and practised by all parties at that time, and was the origin of much of the evil that prevailed. Not only so, but it has provided sad and bitter memories at the present day, which will last to our detriment to the end of the dispensation.

We now unreservedly condemn the policy of forcing conformity by Act of Parliament; of compelling people to attend Church under penalty of a fine; of passing a Test Act, whereby a person should be compelled to partake of the Lord's Supper in order to prove his fitness for a civil post; and of similar acts whereby men should not be allowed liberty to worship in the way their conscience dictated—so long as the laws of morality or the peace of the realm were undisturbed.

It was, indeed, insensate folly for the State to consider it to be its business to declare that the religious opinions of the people could be coerced by the civil arm on the ground that nonconformity menaced the security of the State. At that period our rulers were not wise enough to see that where the realm of conscience begins, State authority ends. That authority may silence, but it cannot convince. The one realm is mental and spiritual, and must, therefore, be controlled

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by mental and spiritual forces. The other realm is material. In this realm, indeed, brute force, imprisonment and fine may, for a time, prevail.

Puritans and Royalists alike forgot this fact, even as Catholics and Protestants had forgotten it before. The Pope burnt Huss and Jerome—but Calvin also burnt Servetus. The persecutions of Churchmen were emulated by the Puritans, so that the days that followed the great Rebellion were characterized by rank intolerance. We have said that it was made penal for clergymen to use prayers from the Book of Common Prayer. On one occasion a calf was baptized in a church by a ribald jester, attired in a surplice, in mockery of the Christian Sacrament. Churchmen everywhere were imprisoned and subjected to every form of humiliation. Indeed, from the point of view of a constitutional lawyer, the Protector Cromwell and his adherents committed just those breaches of law for which they had brought Charles Stuart to the block.

It was all done professedly with a view to the safety of the State. In the days of Charles I. or II. nonconformity was understood to mean disobedience to the law—treachery to the King and Constitution. In the days of the Commonwealth, the same principle prevailed, but the penalty was directed against Churchmen. People began to want Toleration for themselves, and bitterly complained when they were persecuted; not exactly because they realized that persecution was *wrong*, but because they had a profound

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conviction that their opinions—and those alone—were *right* and susceptible of toleration.

When, however, by the turn of the wheel, such people, from being weak, became strong; and their opponents, from being strong, became weak—the tables were turned with a vengeance! They did to others what others had done to them, and that without the smallest compunction; being convinced that their own doctrines and opinions were orthodox, and that it was the prerogative of the orthodox to stamp out the heterodox!

It is a sad commentary on human nature to reflect that the pilgrims who went to New England to escape persecution in the Old Country should have instituted the most rabid and ingenious persecution in their new home. There suffered bitterly at their hands the Quakers—that pious and unoffending folk who (with very much in their religious system which is bald and uninteresting) have yet displayed the most marked example of courage and consistency in their hatred of violence and their reliance on the doctrine and practice of non-resistance.

What brought about the change in opinion and practice of which we are now conscious?

It may be attributed to the decay of the Papacy under the influence of the world's growth, of the spread of discovery, of invention, of science; to the break up of the Greek Empire at Constantinople, and all that followed by way of the Renaissance; to the Reformation, which brought men back to the unsealed fountains of the Bible, the

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Pulpit and the Press ; putting them into touch with the Apostolic age and primitive times, so that men, unhindered, could read and hear the pure precepts of our Founder. Wise therefore in the light of sixteen centuries of stress and toil and strife, due to secular injustice, force, and fraud ; and in the light of the far worse spectacle of that travesty of God's Kingdom on earth, furnished by the history of the Papacy, the more thoughtful among men attempted to put away the scales from their eyes and to discern the forcefulness of gentle truth.

GROWTH OF IDEA

The principle of complete Toleration slowly emerged into an entity at the close of the sixteenth century, amidst the clash of argument which heralded the New Age. Indeed, the literature of the seventeenth and even of the eighteenth century adds but little to the cogency of arguments which had long been advanced. It all came to this principle, which was stated by an English writer in 1644 : "The compelling of a man to anything against his own conscience, especially in matters of faith, is a doing of evil." This sentiment is found in a rare pamphlet entitled "Liberty of Conscience," of which Mr. S. R. Gardiner gives an account in the *English Historical Review*, vol. i. p. 144. Mr. Firth (*id.* vol. ix. p. 715) has identified the author as a merchant, by name Henry Robinson. For an account of the gradual growth of opinion about

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Toleration in England, see Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. iii. p. 98, &c.

Naturally, at first, Toleration was favoured by the weaker party, and neglected or discouraged or even outraged by the stronger. The cry naturally came from that party which was underneath, not from the "top dog." In regard to its application as a practical principle, the question arose: "Who is to begin?" If one were to tolerate one's neighbour and allow him to constitute a majority, would he tolerate you? Professedly, Cromwell would "meddle with no man's conscience"; but, in practice, he would not allow an individual "to exercise the Roman Mass," or to use the Anglican Liturgy. Thus Tolerance was not exclusively the doctrine of any sect or party. It was not the product of superior enlightenment, still less of growing indifference to religious questions; but rather the result of social development. It rested solely on the basis of empiricism—*i.e.*, of successful experiment. Practically, men became tolerant because they learned to know that no harmful consequences necessarily ensued.

The concession is now rendered possible because of the greater publicity of act, and of the growth of a quickened social and natural conscience—due to the fact that national life has been more largely penetrated by the principles which live in the Gospel of Christ. The divorce between the State machinery and the Church machinery has, in truth, given the Church greater authority in the State.

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PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS—(a) THE HEATHEN WORLD

The larger outlook of present-day Science in a Christian sense, and the study of Comparative Religion in a sympathetic, hopeful, and tolerant spirit, will help us to shift the centre of gravity of our thoughts, and to allow that it is not through Jews and Christians alone that God has spoken to His world.

(b) THE IGNORANT, PROFANE, DEBASED, OF OUR OWN LAND

We are frequently inclined to look with disdain upon the unlettered multitude who sometimes pass before us with insolent mien and unbridled tongue, flaunting their dissolute life ; and to entertain the same opinion as the Pharisees, "That the people which knoweth not the Law is cursed." Charity should lead us to consider the origin, breeding, and upbringing of such a crowd ; then, as the French proverb puts it : "To know all would be to forgive all !" Doubtless, there is much around that calls for rebuke ; but here again one must allow that it is the easiest thing in the world to lose one's temper, to criticize, to scold ; but the hardest thing to behave with charity, dignity, and affectionate condescension. The more degraded, neglected, and sinful, men may be, the greater should be the measure of pity, helpfulness, and

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self-sacrifice exercised by those to whom God and the world have given more, thus recognizing that these runagates represent what *we* should be but for the grace of God.

(c) ROMANISTS AND SEPARATISTS

It is of no use to minimise political or theological differences. There are rigid lines of demarcation dividing us even from those who obey the same laws and subscribe to the same creeds as ourselves. Unfortunately, few of us study the points of difference—historically or theologically; our conceptions are tinged with ignorance, prejudice, jealousy, intellectual pride—which feelings furnish a suitable soil for the growth of intolerance. If predisposition leads us to incline to the Roman model, we are by so much the more intolerant of the Genevan, and *vice versa*.

In common argument, one is oftentimes struck with the poverty of equipment of the disputants; with the forcible nature of the language employed—in alarming contrast to the feebleness of the arguments adduced—with the reiteration of those arguments (under the idea that a statement *must* be true if it be repeated with sufficient frequency!); with the deaf ear turned to the statements of the opponent; and the travesty of the opinions attributed to him—opinions he himself justly and frequently disclaims.

None of us allows sufficiently in opponents for

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the influences of clime, birth, tradition, upbringing, and other "accidents." Most of us were born into the communion to which we now belong; and in most cases, moreover, belong mainly by reason of that fact. The greater the divisions that separate us from others, the greater should be our anxiety to bridge the gulf; the more obstinate and perverted the individual objector, the more strenuous should be our endeavour to restore him to the truth.

WHY WE DO NOT BURN HERETICS NOWADAYS

A note should be made here of the fact that, underneath, human nature is the same now as it was at the time of the fires of Smithfield; but that the manifestation is different, in accordance with the spirit of the age. The militant attitude is laid aside, inasmuch as the principles of justice are generally applied, and of the equality of all ranks before the law. Further, a spirit of indifference and pseudo-toleration has spread—people no longer taking an absorbing interest in those questions which convulsed the community 300 years or so ago. They do not feel sufficiently strongly about disputed points—it being acknowledged with equanimity that there is something to be said "on both sides." Lastly, we are blasé, effeminate, commercialized, too dainty and squeamish to tolerate the smell of burnt flesh! Private judgment is exalted, without reflecting that private

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judgment is, frequently, but another name for private *ignorance*, and that no man has "a right to his own opinion," unless he takes all possible pains to form that opinion aright.

RATIONALISTS — INFIDELS — ATHEISTS — UNBELIEVERS — AGNOSTICS — FREETHINKERS — CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS

We may abjure the dictum, that "no faith is to be kept with heretics," and yet be inclined to argue that no consideration should be shown to atheists. Even Locke himself, in his cold charity, would not admit these to full rights in his Commonwealth. We often try to make out that the honour of our Master or of our Cause is involved, rather than our own. Perhaps, it would be found that jealousy for the Master covered nought but a selfish feeling for our own position, dignity, and denomination. God can always take care of His own dignity, and allow His position to justify itself. *We* are always in a hurry to adjust matters ; whilst, to Him, time is no object.

On reading the works of such men as Paine, Hume, Haeckel, and the like, many persons are betrayed into making a charge of blasphemy or licentiousness, and of considering themselves absolved from keeping up even the forms of fairness or politeness when entering into argument or controversy. Such extreme men as those above mentioned are regarded as outcasts, pariahs, unclean, to be driven

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outside the camp ; but it is important to note that—apart from the vulgar herd of coarse and unlettered infidelity and free-thoughts on deism—there is a considerable number of men and women, who cannot be classed otherwise than as cultured and philosophic thinkers, whose lives moreover (in most cases) are as moral as those of the most orthodox devotees. With a certain margin of charity, we may mention the names of Spinoza, Hobbes, Paine, and J. S. Mill, Darwin, Huxley, Leslie Stephen, Spencer, G. H. Lewes, G. Eliot, and numberless others.

It may be possible to explain away their morality ; but of its existence, and of their earnestness and devotion to truth, there can be no doubt. Further, it must be admitted that there is some justification for their criticism and aloofness by reason of the crude, illogical, character of the morality and religion of a large mass of professing Christians ; and also of the disputes between contending sectaries, involving so many hard words, and so much bitterness of spirit. One says nothing of the coarseness of evangelistic methods employed by such a body as the Salvation Army.

For those who believe that exact conformity to creeds is necessary to everlasting salvation ; and that the ultimate eternal destiny of the individual is determinable by the sum total of his philosophic and theologic belief at the moment of death, such individuals as we have cited are damned beyond all doubt ; but it may well be that, in the mercy

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of the Most High, such late scholars may be put to school for the second time, and, in the Intermediate State, be brought to a nearer and clearer view of all Truth.

It may be our consolation to reflect that the orthodox have enormous advantages in number, wealth, position, tradition, eloquence, and popular favour, over free-thinking and atheistic bodies—and that from 40,000 pulpits, Sunday by Sunday, the doom of these apostates can be thundered out! The orthodox certainly need fear them not, even if they did their worst.

PRESENT-DAY THOUGHTS

Are we truly tolerant now? No! One is surprised at the suspicion, impertinence, and arrogance displayed between members of different sects, and even between members of the same sect. Regard the feelings which exist between many a Churchman and Dissenter, Anglican and Romanist, Tory and Radical, Free-Fooder and Fair-Trader.

Neither may we doubt this truth in respect either of the professed High Churchman or Low Churchman. Each would ban the other, and both would turn their forces against the Broad Churchman, and deny him a place in the home of our common Mother.

In all these cases, Toleration, if recognized at all, is used patronizingly. It is not extended without question, as the birthright of our brother, and as a matter of abstract right and justice.

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OBJECTIONS

Referring to the general principle and the exhortations based upon it, it may be said: "Are you not proving too much?" "Are we to cease from criticising and opposing opinions adverse to our own?" "Are we to lay down our arms and suspend all right judgment?" "Are we to come over to the belief that *all* opinions and practices whatsoever must be tolerated, and that it is a matter of complete indifference what a person believes or professes, individual conscience being the sole guide?" In that case, perfect toleration would be perfect anarchy. But we are not called upon to give up the case in this manner. Naturally, absolute truth resides only within the shadow of the Throne of God; but, in the search after truth, as the centuries have rolled by, mankind has had to be content with imperfect ideals. The canons, the criteria, of truth have varied, or have seemed to vary, from age to age, in different countries, as well as in different stages in the life of the same nation or individual.

Whensoever, and wheresoever, mere opinions crystallize into practices contrary to the security of purity, of family, or social, life, then it is permissible to take repressive action.

This Essay seems to prove that the history of the spread of truth and charity is a melancholy one—the way being strewn with wreck and carnage. In favoured lands, the victory has been

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gained not only by workers and writers in union with the Catholic Church, but by atheists, agnostics, separatists, radicals, and nonconformists. It may be a hard and bitter truth for us to allow, but honesty compels the confession. The fact is partly to be explained by the dominant spiritual, political, and privileged position occupied by the Church. Originally, this dominance obscured to the minds of members of the community the need for toleration; but those who wear the shoe know where it pinches, and it was but natural that separatists should be the first apostles of tolerance.

The victory has been won, theoretically; but, practically, the leaven has not penetrated far; the demon of intolerance has been scotched—not killed. It may not be permitted that one man should lay violent hands upon another; but bitter feelings still exist between the Church and the sects—yea, even between parties within the Church. It is sometimes said that the spirit of persecution is dead. Not so. The facilities for bringing to judgment—to torture—to death—are no longer to one's hand; but the spirit is still alive, the fire is burning beneath the cooled surface. Even now, many would torture and burn if they could. We doubt it not as respects the Church of Rome. She has the defects of her virtues. Her legacy from the past, her tenacity, her exclusiveness, her insolent pretension and domination, her longing for dominion over the souls of men, would incite to what has always proved a congenial task. Her boast is that she changeth not. Neither may we

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doubt it in the case of the "passive resister"—the political nonconformist—who would, perforce, cause all men to bow down before that hybrid and emasculated God of undenominationalism, because, forsooth, it satisfies his own imperfect idea of truth!

DANGERS

The most important dangers lie in this—that one might be led to think there was no difference between truth and error; that one would grow indifferent to the distinction which really does, and ever will, exist; that one would be slack in upholding the honour of truth, and of its Author and Exponent, Almighty God; that one would afford Error a start, and place Truth at a disadvantage, thus allowing judgment to go by default.

How can we prevent these evils, and best discharge our duty?

a. Not so much by declaiming against Error, as by proclaiming the Truth—with all earnestness and wisdom; in season, and out of season. In respect of this, consider what advantages well-disposed people possess in this Christian State. Those who love the truth are many; they are backed by public opinion in almost every quarter, for the public conscience is keener than the public action; they have the Church and its ministry (20,000 men and more) pledged to their side, ready to live the Life and do the Work.

b. By cultivating social relations with those

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who differ ; by making allowances for birth, education, environment, prejudice ; by pitying and loving the individual ; whilst, at the same time, setting forth Truth, and, in so doing, denouncing Error.

c. By acting according to the Golden Rule—not displaying condescension—not tolerating with intolerant pride and disdain, but with the infinite grace and meekness of a Christian gentleman.

History demonstrates the failure of any attempt to effect the impossible—viz., to compel two clocks to tick alike, to force all minds into one mould, to put authority in place of reason, argument, or example. Christian Councils and Authorities in the past have endeavoured—but in vain—to effect this end.

In relying upon coercive Authority, we must remember that we are addressing ourselves to three orders of mind :—

a. The indifferent—those who do not think at all, but abide in a state of stagnation ;

b. The convinced ;

c. The hostile.

In respect of the first class, persecution is inoperative ; of the second, it is unnecessary ; of the third, it is unconvincing.

Generally speaking, persecution leads to repression of thought, to intellectual inertness, to the moral blight of hypocrisy ; lastly, to the infliction and abuse of suffering to no useful end.

The benefits of legitimate Freedom may be summarized thus :—

a. It banishes stagnation and mediocrity ;

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b. It leads to inquiry, investigation, research, originality of thought, the glory of discovery ;

c. It advances the education of the race in invention, logic, expression, philosophy ;

d. It makes for progressive growth and development in accordance with the principles of evolution impressed upon the universe by its Creator—thus uplifting our ideas of the Great Supreme ;

e. It leads to that exaltation of human character, which reaches its greatest height only when the individual breathes the air of Freedom.

DISADVANTAGES OF PERSECUTION

Thus, persecution has certain manifest disadvantages. It does not reach the source of the evil. No critic can penetrate to the centre of thought, unmask the real man, or unveil the arcana of feeling. A tyrant may stunt the growth of his victim's mind, but he cannot altogether confine its energies. Thought is toll-free. As Napoleon himself—a born autocrat—was constrained to say, “Where the sway of conscience begins, my rule ends.”

But it is alleged that those who suffer are punished, not altogether for their own sake, but mainly for the sake of others, so as to prevent the multitude going astray. Persecution, however, is not needed to convince the orthodox ; whilst, in respect of the indifferent or doubting, it misses the mark, leading (as it does) merely to outward conformity and rank hypocrisy. On the other

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hand, it prevents the free play of thought, of opinion, of argument, of development—thus handicapping truth, and giving error unfair advantage.

LIMITS

In respect of the limits of Toleration, there are two elements to be borne in mind—viz., the civil and the ecclesiastical.

Any corporation, such as the Church, must exercise discipline over those members who submit to her rule. But must Christian Science, Mormonism, and the like be tolerated? Perhaps not; but, at all events, Toleration tends to the exhibition of caution like that expressed by Gamaliel. "Try the spirits to see whether they be of God." Suffer a certain season to elapse, that the issue of any new thought or doctrine be determined. We cannot break the will of an opponent, though we may succeed in bending or in modifying it.

Things that *have* been questioned are, *ipso facto*, questionable. Thus, one should be careful in dealing with uprisings of thought such as those associated with the so-called "New Theology," or with the interpretation of statements concerning subjects like unto the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection. In this connection, special care should be taken not to force the consciences of candidates for ordination.

Toleration need not lead to acquiescence in error, but should certainly lead to the sifting of evidence, and to the suspension of judgment. It is not

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contended that any opinion is permissible when translated into conduct calculated to interfere with the comfort, the happiness, or the morality of others.

So with the State. It tolerates drunkenness as a vice, but interferes only when the vice leads to disorderliness.

GENERAL SURVEY

In this Essay, we have striven to exhibit the need of educing from history and experience a Principle capable of being held at all times, whether of storm or sunshine ; independent of the fact as to whether one party or another is at the top, or likely to obtain a present advantage. In most civilized lands this has been done—this Principle is *Toleration*. At present it is sometimes shadowy—sometimes ideal ; what is needed is a consensus—not only of opinion, but of feeling—in order that the Ideal can be always realizable and translatable into the Real.

In various ways, Divine Providence has so ordered the affairs of men that the worse no longer appears the better reason. We have now a wider horizon, a sounder heart, a larger hope. The advance has been sure, although slow. Even yet it is by no means universal. In our own country, general toleration prevails, even though there is a close union, by the force of tradition and law, between Church and State. In France, the Revolution wrought such vast changes in the relation of Roman Catholicism to the people at large, that, until recently, the State furnished part of the stipends of clergy of all denominations. In

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Italy, a great advance has been made. In Spain, much has been done since the days of Queen Isabella. When that estimable lady left Spain upon her abdication some years ago, there passed her, at the French frontier, a train load of Bibles, which had been long waiting for a favourable opportunity of entering that land—noted equally for priestcraft, ignorance, and intolerance. Even now, however, in various countries—whether Roman or Eastern—vexatious interference characterizes the action of local authorities in their dealings with religious assemblies other than those of the orthodox faith.

In Russia, a curious state of things prevails. Socially and politically, the country is still in the Middle Ages; and a corrupt Church linked to an autocratic State is unlikely to furnish facilities for liberty of thought and practice.

In Turkey, the nominal condition is one of absolute intolerance. “There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet,” is still the popular belief and cry. But the application of this principle is hindered by the weakness and corruption of the Government—a pure despotism, tempered by assassination. It is said that the cross which formerly blazed upon the east end of the glorious Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople is even now there, though obscured by the emblems of the false prophet. May the day soon come when the Christian powers (by a peaceful and bloodless revolution) may bring to an end this last relic of Turkish misrule in Europe, and cause this cross to shine forth with more than its former splendour!

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But the subject is too wide to be treated of in a single essay. Thus, we have said little of the relations between Churchmen and Dissenters in our own day, or about the personal relations of one individual to another.

In these remarks we trust there has not been displayed any traces of that intolerance condemned in others. One has spoken strongly because one has felt strongly concerning the corruptions of nations and churches, but one has dealt with systems rather than individuals.

There is one caution to be given before we conclude—*i.e.*, the necessity for carrying our toleration only up to the proper limit ; and for avoiding the error of supposing that there is no such thing as absolute truth, or that every system of thought or religion is equally true, equally false, and equally useful. That is a species of belief which should be abhorrent to all thoughtful and earnest minds. We, Christians, are enjoined to prove all things, and to hold fast only that which is good. But, together with that true belief, we may, indeed, ask God to bestow the gift of true charity ; so that, distrusting ourselves in a measure, we may, beyond measure, give credit to others for honest endeavour and conscientious belief similar to our own ; and may love and pity the more—the more those who differ from us seem to be wrong—seeking to restore such in the spirit of meekness. So shall we carry out the injunctions of our common Lord—both in the letter and in the spirit.

THE INFLUENCE OF CERTAIN GREAT NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

IN past time, History was divided into watertight compartments, one nation being differentiated from every other nation, and represented as living its own life, and working out an independent destiny.

Indeed, it is true, even to a comparatively late period, that jealousy not only existed between neighbouring nations, but was actually considered to be a legitimate and wholesome feeling ; the good fortune of one country being supposed to necessitate the evil fortune of another, and *vice versa*. Consequently, wars were commenced on the smallest provocation, and carried on at an enormous sacrifice of life and of material property. In fact—the more, the better, in the estimation of the successful combatant.

Fortunately, the conclusion is now emerging that we, as nations, are many members in one body ; that, when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it ; that when one member rejoices, all other members are justified in

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rejoicing; so that we now confess that if we wantonly injure another nation, we are, in fact, dealing a blow at ourselves.

This idea has been helped on by the acceptance of the theory of Evolution, and by the realisation of the Unity of Creation; which has led also to a recognition of the essential oneness of mankind; the doctrine of development (as applied to the natural world) being thus rendered applicable to the world of action, as determined by man.

Out of the past, springs the present; out of the present, will spring the future. No man—no nation—lives unto itself. No act in the great and complicated drama of human life has been independent. All unconscious, in most cases, the *dramatis personæ*, generation by generation, have been instrumental in the gradual unfolding of the plot; each actor being constrained by the circumstances of his birth, of his education, and of the epoch in which he flourished; but each unit (out of his special individuality and freedom of choice) contributing something new, something original, to the general development.

The names and doings of a distinguished few have been preserved in the pages of history; the records of the many, of the οἱ πολλοί, yea, even of whole nations, have almost wholly perished. The minor actors appear upon the scene, in a vague, shadowy, form; and, as we bend our gaze, they vanish into thin air. We may be certain, however, that every act, every word, of every man, in every age, has contributed to the result we witness

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to-day ; a result, nevertheless, which we find it difficult to interpret even in its patent features, but impossible in respect of much of its detail.

The Roman poet said : " Many strong men lived before Agamemnon, but they lacked an Homeric chronicler." True ! One often thinks of the wonderful revelation it would be if the forgotten dead—forgotten because the victims of circumstance—could be revived, and their actions writ large by the Muse of History. How the catalogue of noble names would be enlarged—the records of the past enriched ! But we shall see them on the other side of the Flood, and hear their stories from their own lips ! Perhaps some of us will not be required to wait for our translation to another sphere ; for so briskly is the work of excavation and exploration going on in respect of such places as Troy, Crete, Cyprus, Ephesus, the Fayoum, and the like, that a good deal of history may be recovered that has hitherto been blotted out.

THE EAST

Certain leading facts emerge, and may be dealt with at the outset. It is clear that we must enlarge our ideas as to the existence of man upon this planet and as to the limits of time within which the great drama of life has been wrought out. The Egyptian, Babylonian, and Chinese historic records carry us back 5000, 6000, or 7000 years before the Christian era ; and, even then,

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display a civilization which must have required many thousands of years for its attainment.

What we have learned, during the last half century or so, of the character and extent of this civilization fills us with astonishment.

THE PUSHING BACK OF THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS

Until recent years, the learned were comfortably convinced that none but a Semitic or Aryan nation—to use words now somewhat old-fashioned—could have originated civilization; but the decipherment of certain Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions has had startling results. Here, humane culture is found to have had its origin outside the limits of the white race. Some sixty centuries ago, the sceptre of Northern Babylonia fell into Semitic hands; but language, civilization, and a prevailing “Spiritual” religion pointed to an earlier nation (a Turanian—speaking an agglutinative tongue) now called Akkadian or Sumerian (these terms being derived from the Biblical record in Gen. x. 10) which colonized Babylonia from the shores of the Persian Gulf. Their legends made the first man, Adamu, a fisherman on these shores. Eridu was the seaport of the country, and, when it is excavated, we may learn much of these aborigines. Five miles to the north was “Ur of the Chaldees,” from which city Hebrew tradition affirmed the ancestor of their

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nation to have come. Babylon was a colony of Eridu, and Assyria owed much to Babylon.

The portion of the earth occupied by the so-called descendants of Shem intersects the portions appertaining to the sons of Japheth and Ham; stretching, in an uninterrupted line, from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Beginning on the north-western extremity with Lydia, it included Syria (Aram), Chaldea (Arphaxad), parts of Assyria (Asshur), of Persia (Elam), and of the Arabian Peninsula.

Somewhere in mid-western Asia, we have one of the original centres at which the human race originated, and thence spread out into these various communities.

THE MINGLING OF THE NATIONS—CLIMATIC INFLUENCES

Here, perhaps, one may be allowed to give a caution as to the use of certain names to designate various races of men. There is no *pure* race, no *pure* stock, no *pure* family, no *pure* language. Any terms used to designate peoples must be merely comparative. Even when an endeavour was made—as in the case of the Hebrews—to preserve purity of race, slaves and captives were frequently adopted; and marriages, by affection, policy, or force, were common between the chosen people and the *ἔθνη* outside.

The Eastern origin of man, and of all that appertains to his growth and progress, is incontestable. Even Haeckel (one of the chiefs of the

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pure biologists) says: "Man originated in the old world, from an unknown, extinct, group of the Eastern apes." It seems, therefore, only fitting that the general climatic and biological conditions which led to the origin and development of man in that region, should also lead to the origin and development of the elements of civilization; so that we ourselves may be said to owe to Asia our language, our law, our moral and ceremonial religion, and much of our art, poetry, music, philosophy, and practical business aptitude.

It is important to note the influence of geology, climatology, and other natural forces, upon the physique and characteristics of the inhabitants of a particular region.

Not only do the physical features of a country depend upon its geological formation, but the character and mode of life of the inhabitants are moulded and modified by the same conditions. Thus, the mild, patient, character of the Egyptian cultivator befits the nature of that wide stretch of alluvial fertile land which is watered by the Nile. The mountainous tracts of the Sinaitic Peninsula (formed of the oldest crystalline rocks of that part of the world) have become the abode of the Bedouin Arab, the hardy child of nature (whose hand is against every man, and against whom is the hand of all), who has adapted himself to a life in keeping with his wild surroundings. The great tableland of Tih (less rugged and inhospitable than the mountainous parts of Sinai and Serbal) supports roving tribes (partly pastoral, and gradually

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assimilating their habits to the fellahin of Philistia and Palestine) who cultivate the ground and (at the same time) rear large flocks and herds. Such illustrations might be indefinitely multiplied.

The Great Nations of antiquity, selected for consideration in this Essay, are the Egyptian, Phœnician, Assyrian, Babylonian, Median and Persian, Greek, and Roman: but (in the course of our treatment) we shall have occasion to touch upon others, which demand distinct recognition out of the general welter which crosses our stage.

We purposely put out of consideration—save incidentally—the influence exercised by these peoples upon the Jewish nation, and through that nation upon us; because the leading facts are generally known; and, also, because that subject alone would exhaust the space at our disposal.

EGYPT

The ultimate origin of the Egyptian people is obscure—African perhaps, but certainly not negroid; the primitive stock being largely modified by immigration from Asia. The natural conditions of the country were eminently favourable to the rise of an early civilization. The land consisted of one long alluvial valley bounded by desert on three sides; and, therefore, marked out as a rainless region; but, by way of compensation, watered by the most wonderful river in the world—the “Maker of Egypt”—for that country, as Herodotus says, is truly “the gift of the Nile.”

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In respect of this land, therefore (the greatest result being obtainable, in agriculture and other arts, by the least expenditure of labour), a condition of affairs was brought about highly favourable to the rapid accumulation of wealth and the consequent rise of a leisured class. Hence, the systematic development of Arts and Science, of Architecture, of Astronomy, of Geometry, and of the cults of a splendid and elaborate religion.

Whether Egypt or Babylon first fulfilled her destiny we know not. There are considerations which tend to give the palm to the former ; inasmuch as (when it emerges into the historic period, in the reign of Menes, about 5000 B.C.) civilization had already attained a high pitch.

Its religion may be regarded from two points of view—the first, as affecting the popular theory and practice ; the second, as relating to the cultivated priesthood, the esoteric worshipper. Indeed, this is always so, even as regards ourselves in the present day.

The root ideas of the higher form of faith amongst the Egyptians are certainly worthy of high commendation—referring, as they did, to a dominant power among minor deities ; the persistence of personality even after death ; the resurrection of essential elements of the body ; and the doctrine of retribution as relating to a future state of existence. It must ever be a matter of surprise that these ideas did not affect the religious system of the Hebrews. In their minds, however, Egypt was ever associated with dark and terrible memories.

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Egypt had dealings with our selected nations in turn.

It held Jewry in bondage ;

It warred with Assyria and Babylonia ;

It was dominated by a Persian dynasty, ruling from Susa ;

It submitted to Alexander of Macedon, who founded on its soil one of the greatest cities of old time ;

It accepted the rule of Rome ;

In its palaces, Antony wooed Cleopatra ;

On its shore, Pompey fell ;

There, great Cæsar raged, and was subdued by love !

THE PHŒNICIANS

These people furnish a distinct element in relation to our subject.

Phœnicia was a tract of country lying to the north of Palestine, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, bounded by that sea westwards, and extending eastwards to the mountain crests of Bargylos and Lebanon. It had a coast line of about 230 miles. Its territory was thus a mere strip, embracing an area of about 3000 square miles. The tract included within these limits was of a remarkably diversified character. The chief plains were those of Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Beyrout, and Marathus. The eastern region furnished inexhaustible stores of forest trees, which provided Phœnicia with her warships and an immense commercial navy. Natural harbours were absent,

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except when littoral islands furnished a protection from the prevalent winds, as at Tyre and Aradus ; elsewhere, nature provided nothing better than open roadsteads ; and all her famous harbours were the work of art.

There is a general agreement amongst the more recent ethnologists that the Phœnicians belonged, not to a nation of Hamitic origin, akin to the Egyptians, as was originally supposed, but to the Semitic group. The Semitic character of its language is indeed indisputable. They were a people in whose minds religion occupied a prominent place. Even their ships carried images of the gods in place of figureheads, so that wherever this people went they bore with them their religion with their warships. The distinctive character of that religion remains, however, a matter of controversy. It would appear to have been of a polytheistic nature—worship of a somewhat narrow character.

We are indebted to this people for many inventions and discoveries—such as the elaboration of glass, and the employment of the purple, or Tyrian, dye. They excelled in the manufacture of textile fabrics ; they produced on a large scale all manner of household utensils and implements—partly in clay, partly in metal—together with ornaments of various kinds. These constituted the elements of an enormous export trade, carried on alike with semi-civilized and barbarous peoples.

If a nation becomes highly civilised, artistic, and refined, she has necessarily developed a leisured

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class; the rise of such a class being due to a continued season of material prosperity. This prosperity cannot be wholly derived from its own resources, but must be chiefly the result of external trade and commerce.

Hence, the primitive countries of the world which earliest attained to eminence were such lands as Babylonia, Egypt, and Phœnicia. The first filled the seas adjacent to the Persian Gulf with its argosies. The second traded along the eastern shores of Africa. The third despatched its galleys to thread the mazes of the Archipelago, to penetrate the Pillars of Hercules, to proceed with bold eye and firm hand through the wind-swept Bay of Biscay to establish a trade with the Scilly Isles, Cornwall, and the Isle of Wight, and to trade for amber even into the fog-enshrouded Baltic. Neither were the Red Sea and the mystic lands due south debarred to the Tyrian traders, who fearlessly launched their ships into the Indian Ocean and extended their commerce even as far as Malabar and Ceylon.

Phœnicia colonized Cyprus, Cilicia, Lycia, Rhodes, and Crete, together with the Cyclades and Sporades. From these islands the advance was easy to the islands of the Northern Ægean, Lemnos, Imbros, Thasos, and Samothrace; hence to the shores of the Black Sea. In the opposite direction, an advance was made from Crete and Cythera towards the west in respect both of Europe and Africa.

Doubtless their alphabet, like all others of

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which we have any knowledge, originated in a picture-writing ; but whether their characters were modifications of the Egyptian, or of the Hittite (which still, alas ! remains undeciphered), or of the Cypriote, or were abbreviated forms of a picture-writing peculiar to themselves, has been the subject of fierce and prolonged discussion.

As for the limits of the history of this versatile and interesting people, we may place them from the establishment of Sidon, Arka, Aradus, and Simyra, in the beginning of the historic period (Gen. x. 15-18) to the destruction of Tyre by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.—a long and fascinating history ! dealing, as it does, with inventive skill, the passion for discovery, a keen, commercial instinct, and a literary predilection which led to the elaboration of an alphabetic and numerical scheme, which has furnished a sure basis for so many others.

THE ASSYRIANS

The civilization of the Assyrians, as has been already observed, was originally derived from the Babylonians. They were a Semitic race, originally resident in Babylonia (which, at that time, was Cushite), and thus acquainted with Babylonian invention and discovery. Finally, they ascended the valley of the Tigris, and established themselves as a distinct nationality in the tract immediately below the Armenian mountains. In great measure, their modes of writing and building, the form and

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size of their bricks, their architectural ornamentation, their religion and worship, were drawn from Babylon, which they always regarded as a sacred land—the original seat of their nation, and the true home of all their gods, with the one exception of Asshur, the son of Shem (Gen. x. 22).

Still, as their civilization developed, it became, in many respects, peculiar. Their art is of home growth. Their pictures of war, and of the chase, and even sometimes of the more peaceful incidents of existence, have a fidelity, a spirit, a boldness, and an appearance of life, which place the designers high among realistic artists.

The advanced condition of the Assyrians in various other respects is abundantly evidenced alike by the representations of the sculptures and by the remains discovered among their buildings. Notwithstanding, in most important points, they were barbarians.

THE BABYLONIANS

Babel—Babylon—is properly the name given to the capital city of the country, which is called in Genesis, Shinar; and, in the later Scriptures, Chaldæa. The architectural remains discovered in Southern Babylonia, taken in conjunction with the monumental records, seem to indicate that Babel was not at first the capital, nor indeed a town of great importance. Erech, Ur, and Ellasar all appear to have been more ancient than Babylon, and capital cities when Babel was a

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village. The first rise of the Chaldæan power was in the region close upon the Persian Gulf ; then the nation spread northwards up the course of the two rivers ; and the seat of government moved in the same direction, being finally fixed at Babylon, perhaps not earlier than 1700 B.C. Scripture represents the "beginning of the kingdom" as belonging to the time of Nimrod, the grandson of Ham (Gen. x. 6-10). The most ancient inscriptions appear to show that the primitive inhabitants of the country were really Cushite ; *i.e.*, identical in race with the early inhabitants of Southern Arabia and of Ethiopia. Originally the people were called the Akkadin (Gen. x. 10).

Their government was rude and inartificial ; their religion, coarse and sensual ; their conduct of war, cruel ; even their art, materialistic, and so, debasing ; they served their purpose when they had prepared the East for centralized government, and had been God's scourge to punish the people of Israel (Isa. x. 5, 6). They were, therefore, swept away to allow the rise of that Aryan race which, with less appreciation of art, was to introduce into Western Asia a more spiritual form of religion, a better treatment of captives, and a superior governmental organization.

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS

There are grounds for thinking that, at a very early date, an Aryan element existed in the population of the Mesopotamian Valley, side by side

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with the Cushite and Semitic elements. Therefore, it is not at all impossible that, for a time, the Medes may have been there the predominant race; and may, afterwards, have been overpowered and driven to the mountains.

Cyaraxes conquered Assyria and captured Nineveh about 625 B.C. It is probable that the Assyrian organization was continued by the Medes; the subject-nations thus retaining their native monarchs, and acknowledging subjection merely by the payment of an annual tribute.

The conquest of the Medes by a sister—Iranic—race, the Persians, under their native monarch, Cyrus, led to the capture of their king, Astyages, and the subjection of the country. These peoples had the same Aryan, or Iranic, origin; the same early traditions; the same language; nearly the same religion; and, ultimately, the same manners and customs, dress, and general mode of life.

The original religion of the Medes must undoubtedly have been that simple creed which is placed before us in the earlier portions of the Zendavesta. Its peculiar characteristic was Dualism; *i.e.*, belief in the existence of two opposite principles of good and evil, nearly, if not quite, on a par with one another. Ormuzd and Ahriman were both self-caused and self-existent; both indestructible; both potent to work their will. Besides Ormuzd, the Aryans worshipped the sun and moon, under the names of Mithra and Homa; they believed in the existence of numerous spirits or genii, some good, some bad, the subjects and ministers respectively

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of the two powers of Good and Evil. Their migration brought them into contact with the fire-worshippers of Armenia and Mount Zagris, among whom Magism had been established from a remote antiquity. The result was either a combination of the two religions ; or, in some cases, an actual conversion of the conquerors to the faith and worship of the conquered. So far as can be gathered from the scanty records in our possession, the latter was the case with the Medes.

The customs of the Medes are said to have nearly resembled those of their neighbours, the Armenians and the Persians ; but *they* were regarded as the inventors, their neighbours as the copyists. They were brave and warlike, excellent riders, and remarkably skilful with the bow.

THE GREEKS

Concerning this remarkable people, how much may be said—what a lengthening vista of interest is opened out !

A consideration of the physical features of Greece—its rugged heights—its land-locked valleys—its indented coasts—its intercourse with Tyre and Sidon, with Cyprus and Egypt—with the extended shores of a hundred lands—east and west, north and south—prepares us to deal with the character of the people cradled in such a land—sturdy, self-reliant, lovers of freedom and debate, ingenious, and versatile.

The division into various states—originally

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brought about by this same physical demarcation—led to a clash of interests and a differentiation of policy and of character.

The distinguishing feature of the Greeks—from early times, a centre of interest and influence to peoples more or less highly civilized, such as the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Cypriotes, and Hittites—was eclecticism. Their language, too, helped to make the people, even as the people had made the language. It was strong, it was flexible, it spread itself out so as to include three Numbers—Singular, Dual, and Plural; three Voices—Active, Middle, and Passive; so that every logical distinction, every shade of meaning, every turn and convolution, could be fitly and fully expressed.

What a wonderful and all-embracing record does not their history furnish!—a very world of thought, feeling, and action.—Homer and Hesiod amongst the poets; Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes amongst the tragedians and comedians; Herodotus, Thucydides, as historians; Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, as philosophers; Apelles, Parrhasius, Zeuxis, as painters; Dipœnus, Scyllis, Lysippus, Phidias, as sculptors; Demosthenes, Æschines, as orators; Solon, Aristides, Pericles, as statesmen; Themistocles, Leonidas, as leaders and warriors; Alexander (sustained by Greek *esprit* and valour), as one of the few born leaders of men.

Thus the Greek peoples had a treasure better and more splendid than any material inheritance;

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a treasure which was the heritage of every one of them, and of which no one could rob them—the great writings, the great works, the mighty deeds, the noble example of their countrymen—who, being dead, yet lived, and spoke, and moved—a great uplifting force to the whole world at large.

Here we have the best of all combined to make the best—in respect alike of religion, strength, virility, philosophic insight ; of might to conceive, of power to execute ; of a poetic and exquisite sense of the beautiful so as to justify the setting up of the headstone of the nation (great even in death) with “Grace unto it, glory unto it,” to be inscribed upon it by the common attribution of all succeeding generations.

In her tongue—so flexible, so sonorous—our O.T. sacred scriptures are to be found in the LXX version—yea, in that self-same tongue the New Testament was first set forth ; the halls of our schools and universities still resound with the echoes of her philosophy, her drama, her historic lore ; specimens of her buildings, her sculpture, her fictile art are still to be seen in every museum, oftentimes stained and mutilated, it may be, yet delightful even in their ruin, at once the ideal and the despair of every artistic mind and hand.

THE ROMANS

Much that was good in respect of the Greeks yet lived in the Romans—for, as in so many other cases, the vanquished conquered their conquerors.

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In the Romans we have a robust race, cradled in one of the most beautiful countries of the world, until their mailed fist had stricken down all their foes, and carried their eagles over the greater part of the civilized world in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

They were noted for their discipline, daring, and bravery in war ; for their prowess and success in colonization ; for their road-making, bridge-building (*pontifex*=bridge-builder—ever being a title, even of sacred honour, borne alike by emperor and high-priest) ; above all, they were distinguished, in the moral sphere, by their philosophy, and by their administration of the will of the Divine in respect of the rule and reign of Law—that Law which has so profoundly acted upon every European code.

They were of a coarser grain and fibre than the Greeks ; more elemental, yet more restrained, in their emotions ; more dogged, persistent, prone to ride rough-shod over opposition. Hence their philosophy was not so cogent, their drama not so dread and powerful, their wit not so keen, their sense of beauty not so acute, as in the case of the Greeks.

As the steam-roller to the Flying Dutchman—as the bull-dog to the greyhound—so the Roman to the Greek. But their peculiar qualities stood the nation in good stead, as its sons advanced in serried array—with slow steps, yet with stern and unconquerable mien—to the conquest of the world.

“THE FULNESS OF TIME”

IT is always more difficult to defend than to attack. Hence Christian-Evidence lecturers frequently find themselves at a disadvantage, and that for reasons such as the following, viz.:

(a) They are obliged to confess their ignorance of many things, of which (if the truth were known) all other persons are ignorant ;

(b) They cannot give logical or outwardly demonstrable proof of most of the facts or phenomena they allege as to spiritual things ;

(c) They are credited with many stupid and vicious mistakes which so-called Christians have committed in past generations ;

(d) They are indicted and, possibly, frequently proved fallible, as to points of detail.

Thus it is important for Christian apologists to soar aloft and take a far-reaching and wide sweep of the world's horizon, in order to try and gather an idea of any great principles of government which may emerge, and of any tendencies which may seem to manifest themselves.

It ought to be in that direction that universal experience (*i.e.*, universal history) should prove useful.

What are the lessons, then, to be learned by

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observant, thoughtful, unprejudiced, and reflective minds from the pages of history ?

At first sight, everything would seem to be but a strange medley, overloaded with detail. We should see garments rolled in blood ; as we listened, we should hear naught but confused noise and tumult ; but, as we bent a keener attention, certain lines would appear to become clearer ; one note would dominate all others ; culminating in the conclusion that He Who made the world must be greater than the world ; that He Who fashioned man and bestowed upon him illimitable faculties would finally justify His creation, by the means He has appointed for exercising man's faculties and realizing his aspirations.

Sin is but another name for ignorance, imperfection, and disobedience. When man sins in any way, he is dimly conscious that he breaks a law higher than his own. Further, one sin leads to another, rebellion persists, and man learns to hate that Being he is conscious of injuring. This feeling cannot be overcome by a word, or in a day.

At length, man learns the awful truth that it is easier to sin than to secure remission of sin. At the first, this is necessarily a long process, inasmuch as ancient habit has to be broken, resentment allayed, ignorance illuminated ; but, through long experience of the fruits of disobedience, man is taught the heinousness of sin ; the impossibility of its own remittal ; the impotence of the sinner to realize his slavery, or to obtain relief from self ; above all, the necessity of becoming illuminated

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as to the true source of hope, forgiveness, life, and light ; and of being made acquainted with the fact that God needs not to be reconciled to man, but that man needs to be reconciled to God.

Hence, it was only by slow and steady steps, over a long series of years, that the Divine Father and Judge could succeed in bringing the sinner out of the slough of hate, ignorance, and despond ; and setting him in right relation to Himself.

All nations—as all individuals—are granted by the Supreme a message for themselves, and (through themselves) for the world at large. They may not realize the fact, or give this message in its purity and fulness ; in fact, no one does so effectually, though some communities and individuals fail more than others.

It is allowed that, above all nations of the earth, the Jews were entrusted with a moral mission. Other peoples were conspicuous in war, government, art, letters, or philosophy ; but the Jews in none of these, for theirs was a nobler destiny ; viz., to prepare the world for a universal Church, to bring to the birth One Who was the flower of the human race, even Jesus the Messiah. But, in the wisdom and providence of God (conditioned as it was by the obstinacy and free-will of man), the working out of the drama of redemption took long ages. Now, however, it is possible to see something of the means by which this scheme was accomplished, and to follow with rapt attention the gradual preparation of the world for the Saviour's advent.

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We can realize, at least, three steps by means of which the end was consummated. What indeed was necessary? Something of this kind:—

- (a) The conception of a central truth as to the unity and universality of a Supreme God ;
- (b) The consolidation of a universal Empire, through the utmost bounds of which this truth might be proclaimed ;
- (c) The use of a universal language, in which this proclamation might be fitly framed.

(We shall see that all these requirements, in large measure, were satisfied at the epoch of the birth of Jesus Christ.)

THE FIRST POINT

In order to establish the first point, it will suffice to follow up the history of the Jews.

Terah, the father of Abraham, was a maker of idols ; Abraham, himself, in early life, was an idolater. Although possessed more than others with the revelation of a personal and covenant-keeping Jehovah, his descendants, again and again, fell away into idolatry—in Egypt, in the wilderness, in the times of the Judges, during the reigns of the Kings, both in the Northern Kingdom and in the Southern. The Assyrians acted as a scourge in regard to the Israelites, and carried them into a captivity from which they never returned. To the men of the Southern Kingdom, God was more merciful. In due time, He led them into Babylonia, so that they should see heathenism in its

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original home, and heathen practices carried out with full devotion.

It was a bitter, but a salutary, lesson ; a lesson fully justified by its results. In former days—as has been said—the Hebrews were polytheistic, worshipping the gods of the surrounding nations—Baal, Milcom, Remphan, and the like—starting aside like a broken bow, committing idolatry (*i.e.*, spiritual adultery) under every green tree—the prophets wearying themselves with denunciations of their practices.

At the close of the Babylonian and Persian Captivity, a remnant of the Jews returned to Palestine, sternly and rigidly monotheistic ; having put aside, at once and for ever, any inclination to the worship of idols, either as shadowing forth Jehovah, or as being frankly antagonistic to Him.

They upheld this One Truth, with sacrifice of blood and treasure, during the Maccabæan period ; they withstood the Roman power and persuasion to the death ; from the destruction of Jerusalem all through the bitter struggles, sufferings, and temptations of mediæval times, even down to our own days, they have set their face, as a flint, against any departure from the idea of One God—Sole and Incomprehensible—even the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (mistakenly) proving a stumbling-block to their conversion.

This, then, was one element, the first, the greatest, in the realization of the “fulness of time,” the setting forth without qualification, of the central truth, that the Lord is One God—the

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God of the whole earth—that there should not, cannot, must not, be any other but Himself alone.

THE SECOND POINT

Seeing that the chosen race constituted a small, insignificant, and despised people—held in a state of perpetual servitude from the days of the Babylonian Captivity onwards—how could they secure the acceptance, the transmission of this great truth?

In the divine order, this was fitly and fully provided for.

During the Persian captivity, opportunity was given to certain of them to return to Palestine and rebuild their capital city.

It is traditionally asserted that Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem on his eastward conquering march, and that he was profoundly impressed by the High Priest's reception. In the person of this monarch, the Græco-Macedonian empire attained its greatest limits, East and West being joined together as they had never been united before. At the death of Alexander, the vast empire was parcelled out among his generals; but an original stamp had been impressed upon its component parts. Several causes contributed to this result, besides the accident of conquest. Amongst others, we may name the spread of the language of Greece, of its philosophy, and of its art. These influences mastered the world, and

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held sway over it for generations after the sceptre had fallen from the grasp of its rulers.

In Palestine, in the wake of the Grecian kingdom or kingdoms, followed the Maccabæan, and then the Roman. The characteristic qualities of the latter mighty people led them to subdue, to rule, to give laws, to consolidate. Their kingdom stretched from the Pillars of Hercules to the Euphrates. It included also the African states on the shores of the Mediterranean. It was larger, more compact, more unified, than any empire that had preceded, or—in some respects—that has since appeared. If we sought for a combination of circumstances more favourable for the completion of God's purpose, for the elucidation of His prophetic messages, for the realization of the hope of all souls expectant of His Kingdom, we should be unable to find one.

Consequently, we realize the significance of the advent of Jesus Christ at this epoch, and of His birth in a province of the Roman Empire, during the splendid rule of that Augustus who was saluted universal monarch and deity by all nations of the civilized world.

This, then, furnishes the second element in “the fulness of time” which determined and realized the divine purpose in the setting forth of the Son of God.

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THE THIRD POINT

But the message with which He was charged required to be translated from a heavenly into an earthly vehicle. Which should be the chosen language? Was it sufficient that the Master Himself should speak first to the Jews in their own tongue; and that, in the same tongue, His Apostles should also begin their ministrations? Not so, for the universal Lord would speak to the universal kingdom in a common language.

What language at that time fulfilled the requirements? But *one*—the Greek. At different periods of the world's story, different tongues and syllabaries have struggled for the mastery in the Western world. At one time, it seemed probable that the cuneiform script would win the day; but it was not so to be. The chosen mystic characters (parent of so many fruitful themes) originally came from the romantic land of Egypt, being elaborated there from picture-writing. The hieroglyphics underwent numberless changes in form, in meaning, in pronunciation; until, at length, the restless and active Phœnician selected from them the characters that commended themselves best to his commercial instinct and need, and stamped upon twenty-two of these forms the sign-manual of thought and communication. With sundry modifications, these were transmitted to the Greeks, amongst whose various peoples the different dialects were finally resolved into the

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Attic—a tongue strong yet flexible, comprehensive yet compressive, logical yet poetical!

Owing to the political, social, literary, and commercial activity of the Greeks, this language assumed commanding importance. It was carried by Greek sailors into every sea and island, and by Greek colonists into all civilized lands. Greek tragedians and philosophers thus perpetuated their thoughts. Scholars in every land found it necessary to learn Greek; its literature became a quarry to all men. The thoughts contained in it dominated the Middle Ages, and, even in these latter days, are studied in our schools and universities. Through it, and the literary treasures embodied in its signs, the conquered Greeks vanquished their conquerors, the Romans. The Jews in Palestine, in Asia Minor, Egypt, Rome, throughout the Dispersion, spoke Greek. The Old Testament Scriptures were turned into Greek for the use of Græcised Jews in Egypt.

More than all, the Evangelists and Epistolers of the New Dispensation were moved to write in Greek; and, as in the case of the Fourth Gospel, even to adapt Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy, expressed in technical Greek language, for the purpose of making known the mode in which the Word should declare the Father and Himself. Thus the Greek Septuagint and the Greek Testament may be said to enshrine the written revelation of the Will of God to man.

When the Greek tongue took to itself the characteristics of strength, explicitness, universality,

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literary fulness and permanence, the last link was forged in the chain of God's purposes; the last element realized in the limit wherewith the Supreme had bounded the “fulness of time.”

The heavens opened, the angels prepared to sound. The Word became Flesh; God became Man!

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

INTRODUCTION

THIS is but one of many questions brought up in the present day ; implicitly believed for ages in the literal sense of the written word, but subjected to fresh consideration in accordance with the spirit of the twentieth century—responsive, as this epoch is, to new and unexpected claims of historical, logical, and scientific criticism.

Such problems have to be considered, whether we will or no ; they are forced upon us from the outside ; we cannot determine to touch them or to leave them alone—that is decided for us. We might hesitate—as we ourselves should put it—to do, or say, anything which might tend to unsettle the faith of simple-minded believers, but what if, apart from us, that faith be already unsettled ?

It is well that we should consider the present-day problem indicated in our title, without any prepossession, and on the same grounds as the most emancipated and advanced Professor of Science or Higher Criticism ; and, for the occasion, as *learners* rather than *teachers* ; yet, so far

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as may be, with that measure of reserve and delicacy which such a matter demands. A discussion carried on in this spirit may, perchance, tend to help us to make up our own minds, and to declare our conclusions, when and where and how it would seem to be most fitting.

It will be convenient to regard the problem under five headings—viz., Historical, Traditional, Physical, Theological, and Scientific.

HISTORICAL OR TEXTUAL

Looking at the matter as simple history, we cannot fail to notice that it was a usual thing for the founders of states or religions, and for heroes generally, to be credited with a supernatural origin or birth, or with relationship to the gods. Illustrations may be derived both from classical and eastern sources—from peoples alike civilized and savage.

Coming to our own record, we observe that the Virgin Birth is not referred to in the earliest Christian writings—viz., the Epistles of S. Paul. Indeed, that Apostle never once refers to the Virgin Mary by name in the course either of his speeches or writings ; although it should be noted that it is his companion S. Luke (if we assume the genuineness and authenticity of the early chapters of his Gospel) who has given us full and unique particulars of the miraculous birth, and who likewise refers to the Virgin in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

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S. Paul's doctrine as to the nature of Jesus—human and divine—must be inferred from such passages as shall hereafter be quoted.

Neither is the Virgin Birth referred to in S. Mark—the first in date, and the simplest Gospel story, of the school of S. Peter ; nor in S. John—the one that closes the record. Certainly, S. Mark uses the term “Son of God” (i. 1), but that term was very loosely employed alike by Old and New Testament writers. Likewise S. John says: “The Word became flesh” ; but these and similar phrases might well be employed apart from any question of a Virgin Birth. It is as well, here, to make it quite clear that this latter question may be considered quite apart from the doctrine of the Incarnation.

It is not necessary to enter into the genesis or development of the separate Gospel stories, or into the vexed question as to the date of the early portions of S. Matthew and S. Luke ; although it is manifest that much depends upon these things in respect of the solution of our problem. To rule out these early chapters simply because they contain an account of a miraculous birth would defeat our purpose and altogether beg the question. Suffice it to say, that we may regard the several Gospels not so much as the actual works of the individuals whose names are assigned to them ; but, rather, as associated with certain schools of thought, and as having been built up in the course of years from traditionary elements derived from eye- and ear-witnesses—these records

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being added to, revised, and corrected from time to time.

It may be stated with certitude that S. Mark and his school—viz., that of S. Peter—were ignorant of the claim of the Virgin Birth; and that the idea of Christ and the presentation of His life and ministry in this Gospel were quite independent of the claim.

There is no reference to a miraculous birth of Jesus in profane history, or in Josephus.

Certain of the prophecies of the Old Testament may be accommodated with it, and it is not excluded by the double idea of the Messiah entertained respectively by the earlier and the later Jews.

Putting out of consideration for the present the possibility of the communication of this statement to the Evangelists by divine inspiration—which some critics would not be disposed to surrender—and dealing with the evidence as one would deal with ordinary pleadings in a Court of Law; firstly, we have the facts that (from the nature of the case) the statements made by S. Matthew and S. Luke as to the visit of the Angel to the Virgin, and the announcement of the overshadowing of the Spirit (assuming that these were not invented of set purpose, nor derived from vague and misleading tradition, nor from a presumption as to the necessities of the case) are dependent upon the testimony of one person, and one person alone; that this testimony was delivered more than thirty years after the event; that it was held in a fluid state for nigh upon thirty years more, before being committed

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to writing in the form in which it is now found. Of course, it would be the kind of thing that Mary and the others would naturally hide in their hearts, and guard with all reticence and delicacy. Mary would speak of it but to a few (women), and that not till long years after the angelic visitation. Dr. Sanday suggests that she made it known (amongst others) to Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward.

Secondly, we have the testimony of Joseph, Zacharias, Elizabeth—but how Elizabeth knew the fact, at once, we cannot tell—Simeon, and Anna ; all old people (with the possible exception of Joseph), passing away, probably, five, ten, or fifteen years after our Lord's birth—at all events, before His public manifestation.

Thirdly, we have the incidents relating to the Shepherds, the Wise Men, and their contemporaries, which are not corroborated in any way by independent testimony.

Fourthly, we note that angel-visitants and dreams are involved in the story, and that this adds to the *prima facie* improbabilities felt in the present day.

It cannot be denied that there are certain difficulties in co-ordinating the narratives in question (a different set of circumstances being set forth respectively by S. Matthew and S. Luke); as well as in reconciling genealogies, different and differently constituted. Yet this co-ordination, though necessarily involved, is not intrinsically impossible; and, if found practicable, would furnish valuable confirmation.

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Again, there is a difficulty in understanding the words of S. Luke in chapter ii. 2: "This was the first census taken during the time when Cyrenius was governor of Syria"—save by assuming that he was mistaken as to his dates. Again, if Mary were of Judah, and Elizabeth of Levi, how could they be so closely related, save on the supposition—a very reasonable one, by the way—that tribal distinctions were not so strictly observed after the Captivity and the wars of the Maccabees?¹ Further, the principle of accommodation and of latitude of interpretation is freely extended by the Evangelists to well-known texts in the old Testament, *e.g.*:—

Isa. vii. 14: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child . . .";

Micah v. 2: "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, . . .";

Hos. xi. 1: "Out of Egypt have I called my son.";

Judges xiii. 5: "He shall be called a Nazarene (Nazarite). . . ."

Lastly, the sudden elaboration of Canticles by Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon—compositions of a complicated metrical nature, in the case of the Magnificat involving a remarkable parallelism to Hannah's Song in 1 Samuel i.—appears, at the first blush, to be strained and unnatural. Certainly, there are no examples like unto it in ordinary life.

JOSEPH

Tradition represents Joseph as an old man—many commentators allege that he was a widower

¹ If Mary were of Levi (Joseph certainly being of Judah) the priestly and kingly tribes would (legally) be united in Jesus.

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with a family by a previous wife or wives ; they infer his death soon after our Lord reached the age of twelve, from the fact that his name is not mentioned in the narrative subsequent to the visit to Jerusalem at that time. But it is nowhere stated in the Gospels that Joseph was an old man at the period of his marriage to Mary, and the other inferences are only convenient assumptions. It is quite possible—from custom and analogy—that Joseph might have been sixteen and Mary fourteen. Joseph's age and virility at the time of his marriage would seem to have a bearing on the following question : " Had Mary other children besides Jesus ? " Is the objection to this possibility historical or merely sentimental ? There is a significant passage in Matt. i. 25 : " Sed non cognovit eam, quousque peperisset filium illum suum primogenitum."

Hæc verba non abhorrent a sententiâ dictâ, connubii jura post Jesum natum sine dubio suscepta esse. Si quis uxorum plurimorum familiam habebat, conjunctione desistere solebat, simul atque quædam ex uxoribus concepisset.

In the case above supposed, the existence of " brethren of our Lord " would present no difficulty ; but if it be asserted (in spite of the apparent trend of the narrative) that Mary was " ever virgin," we have to assume that the " brothers and sisters " were—

(a) Children of Joseph by a former marriage ;
(b) cousins ; (c) adopted ; (d) children only in a legal sense.

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The genealogies do not settle the matter. In S. Matthew we have: "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, who became the mother of Jesus, who is called Christ." But, in any case, in the eye of the Law, Jesus would naturally be considered to be the child of Joseph; even as in England, under similar circumstances, a child born the day after a legal marriage is presumed to be the child of that marriage. In S. Luke we have: "Being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, whose ancestors were Heli . . .," &c. In both cases, the reference is not markedly inconsistent with the theory of the Virgin Birth. Neither are we surprised that Joseph is spoken of by Mary (when addressing the Holy Child) as "Thy father." This is a conventional phrase, and leaves the matter in dispute just where it was.

TRADITIONAL

In respect of this subject, traditionary evidence is more than usually unsafe, so it is well to omit it altogether in a basic inquiry like the present. What the Church of Rome has accomplished by way of making a pyramid stand on its apex, can be realized by any student with an historic sense, who endeavours to realize the popular ideas of the "faithful" relating to the Immaculate Conception, the life, death, burial, assumption, and present exaltation of the Virgin.

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PHYSICAL

We observe that all that follows upon the conception of the Holy Child is normal—the period of gestation, the mode of deliverance, the care and sustentation of the infant.

The angels declare, “You will find a baby lying wrapped up, in a manger.” Here the sole unusual circumstance, or sign, is to be found in the fact that the cradle was a manger. So, generally, we may allege respecting the purification of the mother, and the circumcision of the Child. All is alike normal. There is no claim made by Mary or Joseph for exceptional treatment of the Child or of themselves by reason of any miraculous element involved.

We observe that S. Paul insists upon the human parentage on the mother’s side: Rom. i. 3, “. . . His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh . . .,” compared with stronger statements: Gal. iv. 4, “. . . God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law”: Phil. ii. 7, “. . . and was made in the likeness of man.” So, also, Heb. ii. 14, “He also himself likewise took part of the same”; John i. 14, “The Word became flesh”; Isa. vii. 14; Micah v. 3; Mark i. 24; Luke i. 31, ii. 7. But all these statements do not touch seriously the problem of the Virgin Birth.

When we think of the nature of the pre-natal growth and the extent to which the structure of the

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unborn child depends upon the mother for support and nourishment—*i.e.*, of substance in every department of its nature—the question occurs, “How could there be any avoidance of the original taint resident in the mother’s blood that nourished the Holy Infant?” Even as the Psalmist says, voicing universal experience: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity,” as also when he avers: “In sin did my mother conceive me.” If a real taint were thus imminent to any one of woman born, why was it necessary to exclude the possibility of Christ being born of natural generation? The Roman Church has admitted the difficulty, and *more suo*, has attempted to solve it by elaborating a doctrine such as the Immaculate Conception, whereby—as is set forth—Mary herself was conceived, and brought forth without sin from the womb of her mother; but this only carries the difficulty a step, or a series of steps, further, *ad infinitum*, even if there were the slightest scriptural support for the doctrine.

It is asserted by some writers that sin attaches to the Will and not to the body, and that it was therefore not needful for our Lord to have an origin different from our own. But biology and modern psychology seem to teach that Will is a function of the complete bodily organism, so that the inception and operation of the Will cannot be considered apart from that organism. If human nature be tainted, then, according to our theory, the Will is also tainted.

It may be asked, “What is precisely the

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question before us ? ” Not the Incarnation. This is allowed and allowable, even by those who deny the Virgin Birth ; determined, as it might have been at any time, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, in a special sense, upon any human instrument. The significant query is : “ Was Jesus born without the intervention of a human father ? ” —viz., Joseph—for Josephus’s and Haeckel’s hypotheses as to the putative father are gratuitously insulting and unhistorical, being entirely unsupported by history, save in the slenderest and most tentative manner ; as, perhaps, by the taunt of the Jews, recorded in John viii. 41 : “ We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, even God.”

It may be asked : “ Why was it necessary to exclude the possibility of Jesus being born of natural generation ? ” We are acquainted with the fact that Eastern peoples have an unconstrained way of speaking of sex problems and impulses—very different from the shamefast and prudish conventions and concealments practised by Westerns of later years. Probably, the simple and common life lived by dwellers in the East partly accounts for the difference ; but (whatever be the reason) among them, marriage is inevitable and honourable, the facts of concourse and child-bearing being accepted without demur. Barrenness is esteemed a curse, and fruitfulness a blessing.

Every Jewish woman longed to become the mother of a son to inherit the property and carry

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on the family name—every mother hoped to give birth to the Chosen Man, the Messiah, who should lead forth the race to universal conquest. God's method of replenishing the world was accepted and acted upon without any implied apology or sense of indelicacy.

Yet, on the other hand, one must allow that there are signs in this narrative that the act of conjunction—referred, strange to say, but to one of the sexes, and that the *male*—should be looked upon as involving elements inconsistent with the character of the "Christ to be"—elements of passion, also (in accordance with older feeling of a supersensitive kind attributed by the Psalmist) eventuating in a transmission of sin. (Exod. xix. 15; Rev. xiv. 4.) Is it legitimate to say that such a feeling of repulsion was not prevalent in the minds of the compilers of the Early Gospel; but that it afterwards arose, and was responsible for the form the narrative took in the case of S. Matthew and S. Luke? Or can we go even further and assert that there was involved a primal necessity on the part of God and man for the birth of Christ from a virgin?

If the question were asked: "Does not this alleged necessity cast contempt upon God's universally ordained mode of peopling the earth?" the answer must presumably be looked for in the present imperfection of man as compared with God's perfect ordained state and appointment. Man is not ever chaste, nor always capable of satisfying his desires—natural and legitimate

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though they be—without passion, wrong, or shame. Would it appear, then, that the objection to the natural generation of Christ is not sentimental, but deeply grounded in man's knowledge and experience of his own fallen nature?

The expressions "first-born," "born of a virgin," may be defined (from the Eastern point of view and expression), so as to accord with either hypothesis. The first-born child may be said—with a certain latitude of expression—to be always born of a virgin (if chaste). It may be noted—to illustrate the laxity with which terms apparently explicit are sometimes employed—that the appellation "virgin" is used by the prophet Joel to express a young woman, whether she has kept her virginity or no, *e.g.*, i. 8: "Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth." Further, the word is occasionally employed even of a man.

THEOLOGICAL

The theological issue as to the true nature of Christ is doubtless interesting, in itself, as a fact; but is chiefly important in respect of the destiny of the world, and in its bearing on our own life and future. "What can Jesus be unto us?" "What can Jesus do for us?" After all, the answer to these all-important questions depends on two things: (1) The measure of the Holy Ghost possessed by Christ as a Teacher, an Exemplar, and a Sacrifice; (2) the apprehension of all these elements by

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our understanding and conscience, and the carrying out of our duty in obedience to God, in dependence on His strength and grace. After all, we are saved, not by facts of history, or by facts relating to anything or anybody outside ourselves, but by our own subjective apprehension, faith, and obedience.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC

If we conclude that the theory of evolution may be relied upon to bear the weight attributed to it in respect of the development of life, can we say that this is contravened by the doctrine of a Virgin Birth? Assuming the Nebular Theory, we are led to the conclusion that when the world cooled down from its original state, its temperature (in certain regions) became such as would be consonant with the evolution and sustentation of the lower forms of protoplasmic life. It seems difficult to conceive how this life could be inaugurated without direct Divine intervention. That being predicated, all is plain. The simplest forms were educed in divers places, and in various littoral zones—these, in turn, being developed into the successive genera and species of plants and animals with which the record of the rocks has rendered us familiar. How the primal inorganic particles were enabled to group themselves into new forms of organized existence, we cannot tell. To this day, no scientist has been able to produce the

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living from the non-living—the organic from the inorganic. What may be discovered, or made possible, in the future, we know not. At present, it is axiomatic in biology that it requires life to produce life.

Probably from some far back simian forms, the races of men sprang; but there is a great gulf between the highest animal and the lowest man; so that, at this juncture, there must be predicated the second great intervention of the Divine to evolve the man out of the brute by the concession of conscience, will, and moral sense. Materialists may deny that such interpositions are necessary; but, apart from them, the gaps referred to would seem to be impassable. This conclusion brings us to the limit of our present inquiry—the transition from the natural-man to the Christ-man.

It should be noted that, in Nature as we know it, there are seven or eight different forms of generation; and that, while abiogenesis is not provable, parthenogenesis is—though only amongst lowly forms of life. This latter fact is certain, though in all things relating to life there is much ignorance—*e.g.*, concerning the origin and transmission of life; the genesis of the mind, of the soul, of the conscience, of the spiritual overlying the material—all these things being shrouded in darkness.

In respect of Christ—whether born of Mary, without human intervention, or by natural generation—it may be assumed that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Him in a peculiar sense from His conception, or His Birth, or the beginning

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of His active ministry. *This outpouring*, in fact, constitutes the Incarnation, which is capable of being comprehended apart from the hypothesis of the Virgin Birth, inasmuch as it is this spiritual baptism which is justified by the record of His life. That record is unique—even when we leave out the miracles recorded in connection with it.

Before and since His day there have been other reformers, philosophers, and martyrs for the faith, but none like unto Him in absolute purity, unselfishness, steadfast courage, freedom from ambition and vain desire—even as in dignity and majesty, loftiness of aim, eloquence, sustained patience and endeavour, fragrance and loveliness of life. We may note, too, His claims to universal rule, to authority and obedience, to Oneness with the Great Supreme.

From the point of view of His Person and Mission, even His anger, His invective, His jealousy for the honour of God, and His assertiveness of claim, truly correspond. Yet, if He be associated with Deity, He is Deity with certain limitations imposed by His human nature; *e.g.*, stress is laid in the record upon His subjection to the Father—as Man. His inspiration is shown not to be necessarily *inerrancy*; but (since goodness is more important than knowledge) it is His moral perfection, rather than His omniscience, on which insistence is laid by the sacred writers. What is said alike in the Gospels and Epistles of the *kenosis*—the emptying of Himself—involves such elements as voluntary ignorance even of the

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(Greek ?) language, of historical accuracy, of scientific fact, of the complete forecasting of the future.

It is manifest that Christ's life and work are viewed by us through the screen of human thought, knowledge, and estimate. It is allowed that this record was preserved by unlearned men ; that much has been irretrievably lost ; that much was imperfectly registered at the time ; much carried down by loose, shifting tradition, and reproduced with greater or less exactness. With certain exceptions, such as the exclamations, "Ephphatha," "Talitha cumi," "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani," we have not any record of the actual words Jesus spake. Further, He left behind Him not a line traced by His sacred Hand. Yet the estimate of our Lord's wisdom and eloquence must be raised, not lowered, by this fact, and rendered still more marvellous ; for even when so much has evaporated, been twisted, watered down and lost altogether, there remains a legacy to the Church of incomparable value—involving simplicity and depth, earnestness and tenderness, in a degree infinitely beyond the record of all other lives. Even leaving miracles out of account, what greater miracle could be adduced than His discourses, and the mastery He showed over the thoughts, consciences, and passions of men ?

To sum up—making a special note of the fact that we are reasoning *a posteriori* rather than *a priori*—we note difficulties raised by the silence of some of the New Testament writers, and by the manner in which the details of the

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sacred birth are recorded by others ; but we allow that (stripped of much detail that appears to be the accretion of later time, and allowing for the poetical setting of events as they presented themselves to Eastern minds) the central fact is rendered not improbable—viz., that the Virgin Mary conceived a Son through the special direct agency of the Holy Ghost. We also allow that the historical written evidence may be adequate, though (from the nature of the case) mainly limited to the testimony of one person. We recognize that the traditionary evidence takes us back, at least, to the date at which our Gospels assumed their final form ; and that, with insignificant exceptions, it has not been questioned until recent times. We are justified in doubting the assertion that the Virgin Birth is contrary to scientific teaching, for (in various crises of the world's history) we feel bound to recognize a break in the divine plan and operation. Of course, it remains true that, to the straitest sect of evolutionists, the Virgin Birth and every other so-called supernatural event would be alike unprovable ; but one hardly sees how that position could be defended by argument, or sustained save by declamation and reiteration.

Thus, we are prepared for the statement that the procedure we are discussing is not necessarily antagonistic to natural law, and that it does not of itself conflict with scientific theories as to the constitution and ordering of the Universe, the absolute quantity of Matter, the Conservation of Energy, and the like.

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We recognize that the birth of souls and the development of will-power—which we witness unmoved every day—take place in a plane but remotely connected with physical operation. We acknowledge that the beauty, majesty, and sinlessness of our Lord's life—from its very beginning—differentiate Him from all other teachers and leaders of whom we have any record, and so appear to demand a different origin.

The absence of all recorded taunts on the part of His enemies in regard to details of an imperfect early life—supposing such taunts were not wilfully suppressed—seems to negative the suppositions that He was born of natural generation, that He lived like other men until the time of His setting forth unto Israel, when (and only when) the Holy Spirit (at His Baptism) was poured out upon Him without measure, whereby the Incarnation was then and there consummated.

We contend that the limitations of His earthly life are to be accounted for by the fact of His taking a natural body, bounded by normal limits of strength, knowledge, and endurance—the only real and limitless perfection being *moral*.

In conclusion, it is only fair to admit that what precedes does not clear up ALL the difficulties of the case, which indeed are well-nigh insoluble; such, *e.g.*, as : (1) "Could he be, indeed, like unto us in all respects, when He differs in such an essential point as the non-intervention of a human father?" (2) "In the face of statements that He was equal to the Father, so far as identity of will

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and purpose is concerned, how is it possible to interpret those details of His life, His passion, and His death, in which He appeals to the Father as one being to another—even as a suppliant to a sovereign possessed of distinct volition and authority?" (3) "Why was it that the Incarnation of the Son of the Great Supreme should take place but in one insignificant planet, hidden away in a corner of a universe comprising 100,000,000 glowing suns?"

We conclude by quoting certain conclusions arrived at by Bishop Gore, which were read after this essay had been written. He says: "The historical evidence for our Lord's birth of a virgin is, in itself, strong and cogent, but it is not such as to compel belief." He goes on to say that "there is something else needed to do that, as in almost all other questions of historical fact, viz., a perception of the meaning and naturalness of the event to which evidence is borne." Dr. Gore goes on to dilate upon the logic of the matter, and concludes that "this logic is strong enough to clinch the historical argument, or even to condition the historical discussion by an antecedent expectation that the birth of the Second Adam must have been physically, as well as morally, miraculous." ("Dissertations," p. 66.)

MIRACLES

PART I

CAN WE RATIONALIZE THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL?

INTRODUCTION

THE most useful and profitable point of view to take, in relation to this subject, will be that which enables us to dispense with presuppositions ; to look at the matter with the unsophisticated eye of an outside observer, and from the scientific aspect rather than the theological ; so that we can attain to a free and unconventional treatment—a mode of treatment admitting of the introduction of much-needed originality.

That being the case, it must not be thought surprising if the method be found somewhat tentative. We shall not willingly shirk any question, indulge in *petitio principii*, or minimize the difficulties surrounding such a large and controversial subject.

THE MIRACULOUS

In one sense, the miraculous is around us on every side, and is manifested, day by day, season by season. Every year, the Law of Variety is

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displayed in the growth of the grape ; every year, the Law of Multiplication in the increase of the seed. Similarly, our Saviour's action was not arbitrary—he never, by extraordinary means, worked a moral miracle, or made the worse appear the better reason. His operation, so to speak, was according to Nature, and in the line of Nature's sequence of operations. It is important to remember this, and to avoid talking of “supernatural” or “supranatural” occurrences, or of “interference with Nature's Laws.” The word Law is frequently misused, being confounded with the word Command, in the moral world. It would sometimes appear, from this misuse, that a Law of Nature could be conceived of, in itself, and by virtue of its own essence, as exercising a constraining influence. This is contrary to fact. A Law of Nature simply indicates a prolonged sequence of phenomena ; effects following causes, and consequents antecedents, in unbroken succession. When some interposition occurs—by the introduction of some new cause, natural, human, or divine—this sequence is broken, and a change is brought about in the aforetime manifestation ; but all this is “supernatural” only by an abuse of terms—as a matter of fact, nothing could be more natural.

What is *miraculous* to one individual may not be so to another.

A *wonder* is something which cannot be explained from the ordinary experience of mankind in general ; something transcending, at a given time, the previous experience of the individual.

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Wonder, miracle, myth, exorcism, sorcery, hypnotism, thought-transference—are nearly all synonymous terms. Each may constitute—

- (i) An affair of brain action and ether waves ;
- (ii) An operation in some supra-physical medium.

Thus, experience of God in other spheres may eventually introduce us to things easy *there*—but miraculous *here*.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this Essay must be borne in mind by its critics.

(a) The writer takes the verbal narrative of the Gospel story, whilst conscious that the final deliverance is simply the traditional setting of the original occurrence.

(b) He takes up a simple position ; free, as far as possible, from preconceived theories ; *e.g.*, neither affirming, nor denying, the divinity of our Lord, but suffering any light as to that supposition to break forth naturally, and of itself.

(c) His main object is to try and discover whether it is possible to discern the lines along which our Saviour's action proceeded, and the means employed to work the designed end.

(d) Even if all these limitations be accepted, it might be said that room for the miraculous was still left ; and that the wonder of the occurrence was not lessened ; but when we reflect that the miraculous is ever with us—both without and within—the difficulty will be realized of finding

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a complete explanation which should include all the facts and phenomena.

(e) Efforts of the kind attempted in this Essay may be deprecated, and it may be urged that discussion should be postponed until the laws of nature and of spirit are more fully understood ; but a beginning must be made some time or other, and the sooner the better, if—even by such-like tentative efforts—popular misconceptions may be removed and prejudices—whether popular or scientific—reduced.

It has been said that there are certain conceptions in relation to miracles which we neither affirm nor contradict. It follows that any conclusions affecting those conceptions would be reached *a posteriori* rather than *a priori*. It is not, *e.g.*, that the divinity of Christ is denied, but, rather, put on one side, so that, for a special purpose, the lowest platform is advisedly taken and the simplest gospel dealt with. If the divinity of Christ be provable, it will not be altogether through prophecy, it will not be altogether through history, or miracle ; but through His moral teaching, and the working out of this teaching in His life and ministry. Further, we ourselves are not saved by facts of history, or by miracles of nature or of healing but by apprehension, and utilization, of that same moral truth, proclaimed by Christ.

Again, this Essay is largely tentative. We are dissatisfied—let us say—with the ordinary explanation of miracle. We set ourselves to find

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a mode of rationalization. Some of the miracles appear to lend themselves to this treatment; others, not so much so. Thus, we pretend not to be completely successful; nevertheless it may be well to make the attempt, and to try and try again in this, as well as in other matters affecting religion, even as each successive age, or even decade, summons us to interpret the truth according to its new canons and requirements.

MIRACLE—MIRACLES

Miracle—as conceived of in the popular mind—may be defined as a sudden interruption, or reversal, or quickening of the operations of Nature, at the will, and word, and interposition of an individual; acting (according to his own claim and declaration) as the accredited representative or medium of the God of Nature.

In this definition, the use of the words “supernatural,” or “superhuman,” has been avoided—as this involves a *petitio principii*. What is “supernatural” to one individual, or to society at a certain stage of existence, may not be “supernatural” to another, or to society at a more advanced stage; but may be consonant with the operations of Nature on another plane of experience, and with the supersession of one law by a higher.

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TERMS

It has to be noted that different terms are employed, in the Hebrew and the Greek, to designate this form of energy, these terms being translated by us — “Miracle,” “Mighty Work,” “Wonder,” or “Sign.”

In the Hebrew we have—

’ōth = a sign ;

môphēth = a miracle, wonder, sign ;

pele’ = a wonder, calamity, portent =

something that causes one to turn aside, from a feeling of fear or awe.

In the Greek—

τέρας = wonder ;

δύναμις = act of power ;

σημείον = sign ;

μεγαλείον = mighty work ;

ἐνδοξον = glorious thing ;

παράδοξον = strange thing ;

θαυμάσιον = wonderful thing ;

ἔργον = a deed or work.

To the “wonder”—in the case of Christ especially—is attached an evidential value ; a mark of power over soul and body—over the whole man. It is a misfortune that the word “miracle” is used in our versions—instead of “sign” or “act of power,” seeing that—in the popular mind—the word “miracle” has almost come to mean a mere conjuring trick.

In general, the evidences for the truth of our

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Saviour's mission proceed along three lines, viz., historical, miraculous, and moral. Of these three, great stress in the past has been laid on the first two ; but, in these latter days, the greatest weight is attached, and rightly attached, to the third. Nevertheless, the narrative is so largely occupied with the recital of miracles and events or discourses, closely connected therewith, that the discussion in the present day naturally excites some perplexity and suggests the question—"How far can miracles be rationally explained and defended?"

THE INNATE POWER OF CHRIST

The subject leads up to a larger issue still, viz., the true personality, and source of the power, of Christ. In relation to His working of miracle, the popular idea appears to be that Jesus acted as a sort of conjurer, wizard, or professor of legerdemain, or sleight of hand. He spoke—the thing was done. There was a total absence of *means*.

The mistake has its root in the vulgar conception of the personality of Jesus ; as a man—yet without the characteristics of a man ; as tempted—yet unable to fall ; as a suppliant—yet to no other than Himself ; as perfect, yet as attaining perfection without a struggle, and without an effort. Thus, His life is rendered unreal, mechanical, automatic ; for there is no credit in being good when one cannot help it, or when

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some constraining power is at work apart from our own initiative. Men are strangely unmindful of the fact that there can be no victory unless there is a possibility of conflict and defeat.

CONCEPTION OF GOD

We may push the matter still further back, and find the true reason for this unnatural idea in the negative (and therefore imperfect) description of God as a Being without body, parts, or passions ; *i.e.*, a thing of Ice — unchanged, unchangeable. Nothing could be further from the truth concerning that Being Who lives in the life of each of us. We must not travel beyond our subject, but one may be allowed to say this—that God could not hate evil, or love the world (and, therefore, desire to save the world) unless He could have a perfect realization of suffering, unless He could suffer *with* the world, and with each pang of each created thing *in* the world.

We have tried to make our position clear as to the treatment of the subject, not so much to disarm criticism, as to divert it into the right channel.

One is speaking to the critical and agnostic world outside, rather than to unthinking, or convinced, believers ; for it must be allowed that miracle presents a stumbling-block to many scientific and well-disposed persons, many of whom may be found, perchance, within the limits of ordinary congregations.

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OBJECTIONS TO MIRACLE

We have all been made aware that History, Science, and Philosophy, alike, enter certain caveats in respect of miracle. These objections are forced upon us, so that we cannot afford to ignore them, or to leave them unanswered.

FIRST OBJECTION

History has something to say in regard to the character of the testimony, and the internal evidence of the record. In truth, miracle must largely resolve itself into a question as to the authenticity and genuineness of contemporary evidence, as illustrated and interpreted by contemporary thought and expectation; an expectation—in the case of the Jews—largely based upon their reading of prophecy.

The evidence ought to be such as to satisfy a legal mind, for apologists should not shrink from appearing at the bar of judgment. The greater the issue, the more searching should be the investigation into the evidence adduced in its support.

We shall dispense with any claim for the special inspiration of the Gospel story. The more Scripture is studied, the more embarrassing one finds any theory of inspiration, other than that general conception which allows for the superintendence of the Creator in the ordering of a world and dispensation which proceed from Him,

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including the literature—not only of the Hebrews, but of all nations whatsoever.

Apart from this, it has already been said that our line of argument is adduced mainly for the consideration of those who accept the Gospels—as they would accept any like work of the same age, *i.e.*—as the composition of men who (with a high and holy purpose in view) are dealing, to the best of their ability, with a mass of verbal and literary tradition, developed along ordinary lines—never subjected to a strict scientific test or verification—but held in a fluid state for many years, until fixed by the pen of the evangelist, and copied, and recopied, with the usual liability to error.

For our present purpose, it may be allowed that the historians were uncritical writers in an uncritical and credulous age, and that the record must therefore be interpreted in accordance with the spirit and temper of the period in which it was compiled.

We can afford to neglect those who assert that the whole story is a fabrication and a myth.

Even agnostics allow it to be abundantly clear from the narratives, that the age was an age of miracle, that a basis of truth is involved, and that one's endeavours should be bent so as, by rational explanation, to arrive at the kernel, and to display the adequate causes which produced the results.

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SECOND OBJECTION

Scientists entertain very definite ideas as to the uniformity of the operations of Nature ; the conservation of matter ; the sequence of cause and effect ; the interdependence of all the operations involved ; and the non-existence of special creation.

The prevalence of these ideas leads to a difficulty in the acceptance of miracle, as popularly understood, *i.e.*, as a distinct interference with the established order of the universe, and with settled law—the word “law” being wrongly understood as, of itself, exercising a constraining influence.

Here, again, we are required to show the due relation between cause and effect—to indicate that the results are not contrary to Nature, but are designed by an adequate motive to subserve a suitable end.

THIRD OBJECTION

Further, a difficulty is experienced by metaphysicians. Apart from the traditionary and elliptical character of the narratives, it is alleged by some thinkers to be increasingly evident that the execution of works demanding the creation and expenditure of physical force does not tend, of itself, to enhance the value of any moral truth enunciated by the wonder-worker.

If the latter were the case, it is asserted that the

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moral teaching of the adversaries of Jesus (who also claimed successfully to be miracle-workers) would have a special value of its own.

In ancient times, all people implicitly accepted miracle. It was a matter of no surprise to them that the miracles of Moses—as, afterwards, those of Christ—were paralleled by the magicians and others. With them, the only question was: “Could Moses—could Jesus—work greater miracles than their opponents?”

In regard to all this, something may be said from the standpoint we have assumed.

Bearing in mind the personality of our Lord, as true Man; the abnormal conditions of Palestine at that epoch; and further, the great light thrown upon the subject by recent investigation into extra-dimensional space, X-rays, N-rays, etheric waves, the constitution of matter, the action of mind on matter, and the like, it is asserted to be possible to rationalize miracle, and to furnish adequate and efficient causes for the results, without invoking “supernatural” power, or interference with the ordinary sequence of cause and effect.

Furthermore, it is important to remember it is expressly represented—as said above—that the miracle is a *sign*, the setting forth of a *credential* of office and mission, *something* that may be apprehended by a limited intelligence, for the purpose of expanding that measure of intelligence, and raising it to a higher level, so as to enable it to recognize the moral and spiritual element reared upon a physical experience, in accord with

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popular expectation and desire. Hence, in the past, miracles appear to be grouped around critical periods.

Thus, a miracle may be conceived of generally as *a physical basis established to sustain a moral truth.*

Our Lord's treatment of the sick of the palsy, as recorded in Matt. ix. 5-6, furnishes just the kind of illustration we need: "For whether is easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, and walk'? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), 'Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.'"

It may well be that to sceptics of the present day miracle, as miracle, would not be impressive. Indeed, the mere capture of a multitude of fish, or the restoration of vigour to a palsied man, may not mean much, of itself. These may now be paralleled every day by the experience of the fisherman or physician; but when we grasp their parabolic character (for every miracle is also a parable), and perceive, in the one case, the analogy of the successful fisher of men; in the other, the strengthening of the inner man, concurrently with the return of energy to the instrument controlled by this same man—when, we repeat, in any given case, this secondary purpose can be proved, the philosophical objection falls to the ground.

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CHRIST—MORE THAN MAN

It will have been observed that the record seems to require, in respect of Christ, faculties and powers of a higher order than those possessed by ordinary men ; and, in this place, it is necessary to state that, as a matter of fact, we do seem to recognise four breaks, or apparent interruptions in the chain of geologic or biologic evolution—the last being associated with the manifestation of Christ.

The theologian has his own explanation of this.

The scientist tests the story of the life of Christ, as set forth in history and tradition, and inquires as to the origin and motive power of that life.

The full discussion of this point would carry us too far. For our present purpose, we will advance the hypothesis that what was different in Christ, physically and morally, was different in so far as He represented Man in his perfect type and estate ; perfect in physical health ; perfect in sense perception ; perfect in moral excellence, *i.e.*, in freedom from sin, and the effects of sin, both in body and mind ; possessing, moreover, a faculty of existence in space other than three dimensions.

In olden times, the sage, or founder of a religion, who claimed to enlighten his fellows, was expected to produce evidence, apart from his teaching, that he was endowed in a peculiar and extraordinary way.

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In the case of the paralytic the miracle was to be a witness on the physical plane, and was intended to be translated with reference to the moral, or higher plane.

Speaking quite generally, the miracle is a revelation of the love of Christ—a manifestation of His enthusiasm for humanity, of His interest in a debased, and often neglected, part of human nature, viz., the body; of His protest against the pagan notion of the material, as essentially evil and worthless; as also against a false spiritualism which regarded disease and discomfort of the body essential to the furtherance of the health of the mind.

The same deep-seated love led Him to bear, by sympathy, the sicknesses of men, as well as their sins. See the following significant texts: Isa. liii. 4; Matt. viii. 17; 1 Peter ii. 24. Read also the following: Mark v. 30—"Virtue had gone out of Him"; vii. 34—"He sighed." John xi. 33—"He groaned in the spirit."

From this we gather that His mighty works were done through His Humanity in order to enable Him to reveal the Divine.

It is interesting to note that investigations into extra-dimensional space, the constitution of matter, mental-suggestion, and kindred subjects—physical, psychological, and pathological alike—so far from rendering the miraculous narratives of the New Testament less credible, really lessen the difficulty which these stories have long presented to many minds; though—at the same time—they have tended to lead the interpretation along other lines,

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and to modify our ideas of the evidential value of miracle.

Lastly, it may be noted, in this connection, that the *true* miracle is really involved in the moral and spiritual world ; whereby, through the power of Christ, the fallen are raised, the drunkards reclaimed, the defiled cleansed from sin, the spiritually dead raised to life—*i.e.*, men and women are made over again. Doubtless, these are “the greater things” spoken of by our Saviour in John v. 20 ; xiv. 12. Reference may also be made to our Lord’s message to John the Baptist, in Matt. xi. 5—“the dead are raised up”—doubtless, not only *physically* but *spiritually*.

Further, on the physical side, the spread of medical and surgical science has rendered it possible for miracles to be wrought by those who, in many cases unconsciously to themselves, exercise the healing ministry of Christ ; so that there may be more miracles wrought now in a single day than were wrought in a century of past time. In these two senses, it is true to say that the age of miracles is not past.

The Apostles worked miracles—as delegates—as agents of the Master, and the implicit surrender of the power of miracle-working and of prophecy in the New Testament sense, in after ages—and markedly by the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic—marks a sad declension.

In this respect—even with all the attendant crudities and puerilities of their miracles (as *e.g.* at Lourdes), the Roman Church has been truer

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than Protestant Communities to the faith and to the ideal mission of the Saviour and Comforter.

Assuming, therefore, the substantial accuracy of the record, from the modern point of view, we will try to throw a little light upon the details of the narratives involved, in order to see what really was required to be done in each of the specific cases adduced.

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PART II

INTRODUCTION

IN Matt. xiii. 58, we read: "Jesus did not many mighty works there"—*i.e.*, in His own country—"because of their unbelief." At first this statement seems surprising, but (when we endeavour to realize the true inwardness of things) we perceive that it follows as a natural consequence.

Again, when we read in John vii. 5: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him," it comes upon us like a shock to learn that those who were of our Lord's kindred according to the flesh—*i.e.*, those who had been brought up with Him, who had had the closest opportunities (in all the gracious and unguarded intimacy and particularity of daily life) of observing His every word and action in the midst of the stress and strain of the infinitely little and yet infinitely trying anxieties associated with the home—that those, be it said, above all others, had not penetrated the serene depths of His character, or plumbed the recesses of His soul.

The lesson should not be lost upon us, for

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mankind—in respect of elemental strength and weakness—is alike in all ages. Men are naturally attracted by birth, position, affluence, display, magnificent appointments, brilliancy of learning, and the like. Perforce these elements must be reckoned with by all as of value and universal currency in the run of life. They are good gifts, and intended by the Giver to be used for good. To the individual possessor—though he generally realizes it not—they furnish tests more trying and fatal than those associated with poverty and deprivation. In relation to the regard in which they are held, there is a danger lest one should assume that where these outward advantages are lacking, nothing of value can be found ; lest one should look at these *exclusively*, and regard the outward and tangible rather than the inward and spiritual ; the external appearance rather than the heart ; what a man *hath* to the exclusion of what he *is*.

The Jews of old had before their eyes evidences of dignity, birth, position, the glory of a palace, the retinue of a king and of his dependants, his profuse display of hospitality, and the like. All this was set forth at the court of the Herods, and in the traditions of the Cæsars of Imperial Rome. Again, the Jews were constrained to marvel at their own teachers—to revere them for their memory, and their mastery of the subtilities of the Mosaic Law—for the interpretations, twists, turns, and convolutions included in commentaries upon the sacred text. To us of to-day this is a very

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dry-as-dust, unpractical, unprofitable kind of learning ; but it was in great evidence at that time, and was held in the highest estimation.

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS

To the outward eye, Jesus possessed none of those gifts and advantages. Certainly, by tradition, He came of the Royal House and lineage of David, but in this He was not alone. There were many at that time, of the race of princes and priests yet of lowly birth.

Much of a man's influence depends upon his social or official position ; and, by *position*, Jesus was a peasant—the son of a peasant ; a mechanic, too, at the beck and call of His neighbours in respect of His craft. His work and His charges would be criticized *then* as such things are criticized *now*. In short, He lived in the simplest, most unostentatious, most ordinary manner.

Truly, we regard His learning as wonderful and unique ; displaying, as it does, a mastery over all the deepest secrets of the human heart ; but that kind of knowledge (confining itself to the simple truths of common life expressed in simple language) does not attract and dazzle as do sonorous nothings outpoured in all the fulness of sesquipedalian verbiage.

To the folk of that day he was unlearned, displaying, as he did, no knowledge of Greek, the fashionable language of the Court, the Forum, and the Academy ; teaching not with the ponderous

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learning, the laboured and buttressed eloquence of the Rabbis ; disdaining the subtilties of the Law and everything that constituted the Higher Education of the time ; delighting not in the involved and obscure, but rather in the limpidity and simplicity of the parable and allegory, or the direct stroke of the proverbial saying.

Consequently, those who (by relationship and domestic or social ties) were responsible for Him, and were, naturally, the first to be called upon to explain, extenuate, and defend His character and His sayings, did not take the trouble to understand why He was so different from others. They did not even realize the difference. Hence, they gradually drew away from Him, becoming cold, indifferent, hostile. Familiarity breeds contempt. In this case, there is again exemplified the tendency to overlook, neglect, despise the simple virtues oftentimes so near to us ; and—on the other hand—to be attracted by that showy and superficial splendour which lasts but for a season.

Another truth is also set forth—the awful loneliness that must have been felt by Christ, even as He moved amongst His fellows, surrounded by thronging multitudes. This aloofness would be realized by reason of the extent and intensity of His thought and feeling. Loneliness of the kind is always more or less the lot of one who is in advance of his fellows in thought, sensibility, or endeavour ; but it is only in the Perfect Man that we have a perfect instance.

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NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR MIRACLES

To the condition of things thus set forth there was but one outcome. Jesus could do no mighty works in any place where unbelief, distrust, or suspicion was manifested. Hence, we gather the simple truth that circumstances on both sides must be favourable before an efficient and miraculous result can be brought about.

What are these conditions on the part of the participants and expectant ?

(a) Definite knowledge and apprehension of their need ; of their inability to help themselves ; of the failure of earthly means ; definite abandonment of earthly help.

(b) Further, on the positive side, the possession of unquestioning faith in the Great Healer to Whose feet they have dragged themselves, and of a spirit of surrender, of hopefulness, of patient expectation. This constitutes a sympathetic condition. To use a technical term, it puts the sufferer *en rapport* with the Agent. This exhibits faith in its highest expression—simple, complete, effectual ; faith that lifts one up with wings as eagles, that enables one to walk on the water, to move mountains, to apprehend without hands, to see without eyes ; a faith that looks for miracles, and is therefore not surprised when miracles come ; a faith which (in return for its simplicity) is given to the simple life in primitive times, but which fades away in later days, with the advance of science

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and the elaboration of mechanical means of alleviation and cure. Henceforth, it is replaced by a drier light, a more real and reasoned apprehension of the cause of disease, and of the elements of abatement and recovery.

The conditions we have noted being fulfilled adequately on both sides, the atmosphere becomes charged with spiritualised electric and vital energy, needing but a word on the one side and a look on the other to complete the circuit, to induce the miracle, to perfect the gift.

It is well for us to look back and realize that the Age of Faith existed once, and that many and varied were its triumphs. But the vision fades as we gaze. We confess that we live in other times, and that that Age has passed away, never to return on Earth. The Reign of Law, the doctrines of Evolution, of Development — slow, inexorable, unyielding — hold us in their grip. We have gained—but we have lost. However, it is useless to complain. We must make the best of the new conditions which, after all, are of God's appointment, and which must therefore tend more and more to truth and freedom. Our trust in Him will preserve us from putting a mechanical construction on the ordering of His universe.

Where miracles are looked for—where, *i.e.*, society is in a certain mental condition (a condition usually associated with primitive times, but exhibited continuously in relation to certain elements of the population moving in a limited

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sphere of scientific activity, but with pronounced traditional religious proclivities) there miracles will certainly happen. Where this state and these conditions are absent, miracles will not be sought; therefore they will not be recognized; unless we conclude, as we well might, that all the operations, even the commonest, of Nature and Grace are miraculous.

These conclusions are applicable, not only to Old Testament or New Testament times, and to Jewish or Christian religionists, but to all peoples in all ages of the world, even in our own day and in respect of individuals of our own nation. Illustrations may be drawn from the pages of Livy and other ancient historians; from the far West as well as the far East; from the recital of the doings of re-incarnated Mahatmas, of Yogis and Fakirs, as well as from the history of the Middle Ages; from the *Acta Martyrorum* and the experiences of individuals; from the general sensations of ecstatic souls down to specific manifestations, such as the stigmata referred to more than once in religious biography.

In the following pages an endeavour is made to supply an explanation of the miracles recorded to have been wrought by Christ, assuming that (as the Creator works by *means* in the ordering of His great universe) the Son also worked by *means* in the elaboration of His scheme for the redemption of the body and soul of any individual. To those who are satisfied with the idea that each act was disconnected and the product of the divine fiat,

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these explanations will not commend themselves. They are intended solely for those readers of a scientific habit of mind who feel the necessity for co-ordinating the operations of the divine mind and will at all times of the world's history and under all circumstances.

CHRIST'S PROCEDURE

In Christ's day what were the qualities distinguishing His human personality, which (in a reasonable way, in accordance with our knowledge of the workings of cause and effect) enabled Him to cause the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the sick to be made whole, those possessed of evil impulses to shake themselves free?

The following may be suggested by way of answer :—

- I. A fulness of vital energy.
- II. A unique—a commanding—personality.
- III. An inherent knowledge of the workings of human life, and of the nature and character of that life.
- IV. A moral apprehension of the effects of sin, excess, ignorance, and wilfulness; *i.e.*, of the real source and seat of disease.
- V. A profound belief in Himself.
- VI. A perfect sympathy, which led Him to draw near, to touch, to appeal. A sympathy derived from perfect love, tending on His part to absolute surrender and self-sacrifice.
- VII. A spirit of quietness, gentleness, yet of perfect courage.

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- VIII. A cool, calm, grave, collected manner, devoid of all appearance of haste, hurry, excitement. (In passing, one may notice that this manner is more marked amongst Easterns than amongst ourselves.)
- IX. A searching glance, sinking deep into the soul, quailing not before any exhibition of restlessness or even violence. (The eye has a wonderful power to subdue and calm. It is exhibited in respect of children, persons demented, and even of the lower animals. With a steady look, one may hold in check, for a time, even the savage beast.)
- X. A steady, encouraging, vibrant voice.
- XI. A cool, gentle, magnetic touch.
- XII. Ofttimes a vehicle of healing, such as water, clay—or something derived from Himself, as spittle.
- XIII. An appeal to the name of the sufferer—*i.e.*, to the real man individualized under that name.
- XIV. The union of spiritual healing and outward cleansing brought about by the declaration so frequently made—"Thy sins be forgiven thee."
- XV. A wonderful power of recuperation (when His system had been depleted of energy by a series of cures) under the influence of solitude, meditation, and prayer.

It will be allowed that these elements combine to convey a sense of strength—latent, it may be, but ready to become active and potential. This condition of things is highly impressive to those suffering from physical and nervous disturbance and exhaustion. It accounts for the wonderful influence our Lord exercised over his contemporaries. It is especially to be noted

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that large numbers of women were attracted, whose nature is such that the above-mentioned qualities exercise over them the most commanding influence. Moreover, these self-same elements constituted a well-spring of pure life, and caused to radiate from the person of our Lord, and to illuminate His face and mien, an unearthly Majesty and Light, difficult to define, but irresistible in its action.

Great importance must be attached to this conclusion, inasmuch as it testifies to the fact that life alone could thus drive out death ; health alone dissipate disease. In Nature, an effort is invariably made as soon as disease manifests itself, or an injury is wrought, to assert at once the force of this *vis medicatrix*. The operation of doctor, nurse, and medicine should be directed to supplement, not to supplant, this force—seeing that any cure or restoration must be due to Nature, and Nature alone. In the subject we are discussing we have a further illustration of great importance—the transference of sickness to health, and health to sickness. Even within our common experience we are conscious of the operation of this law. *E.g.*, if a young person holds the hands of an old person for a long period, or occupy the same bed, the youth of the one passes into the age of the other, and the age of the other into the youth of the one. This fact was not unknown in the latter days of David the King. (1 Kings i. 2.) Generally speaking, if two people dwell together in closest

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intimacy, they become alike in many ways—frequently even in features and expression.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

It is interesting to go through the list of cures set out in the Gospel Story, to observe their similarities and differences, the various methods employed, and to speculate how far these cures can be accounted for by the operation of natural causes and means akin to those to which reference has already been made. They are declared to be *miracles*. The current definition of a miracle is that it is a deed wrought by the fiat of the Divine, or of a Divine agent, and that, at a word, without the operation of any secondary cause, the deed is done or the cure wrought. May not this definition be wrong? May we not seek for the ordinary operation of cause and effect—the element of time being also involved in a greater or less degree?

As to the details of the recital, we have to remember that the testimony is not absolutely direct; that it is the outcome of oral tradition handed down from a series of thirty, forty, or fifty years before it was moulded into writing; and that the first observation and the succeeding narration were made and carried on by men whose ideas of science and strict narration were primitive, and far removed from our own; so that we must judge and interpret accordingly the details of the testimony. Furthermore, it

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is impossible to follow up the cures and to find out the future history of those who benefited by our Lord's action.

Even when stress has been duly laid on the above-mentioned elements relating to the elaboration of the narrative, enough remains to testify that a period of great excitement prevailed; that many wonderful things happened, and that many wonderful cures were wrought.

Some attempt may be made—necessarily partial and imperfect—to interpret the record (varied, as has been said, in respect of traditional detail) in accordance with similar experiences under conditions like unto these, but immeasurably less powerful. The result must necessarily be tentative and disappointing; but, in some respects, it would seem to bring us nearer to a solution, as it cannot fail to throw numerous sidelights on the special problem involved.

1. It was a time of great unrest, expectation, excitement—divinely ordered, it may be, yet operative in accordance with natural law. This excitement was not confined to individuals, but was communicated to large multitudes, which (by the strange and wonderful law of association) were capable of being wrought up into perfect frenzy; leading to strange and marvellous movements and demonstrations on the part of individuals—of men, but especially of women—especially of those of a weak, unbalanced, hysterical, imaginative constitution—in other words, the very ones first to be affected by weakness or disease.

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2. It was a period of primitive belief in respect of the cause and cure of disease and of the remedies employed. In respect of the influence of demons, the evil eye, necromancers, &c., the people generally had a fixed idea as to the efficiency of charms, potions, amulets, witchcraft, devilry, and sorcery.

3. Our Lord had a unique personality, in which perfect health and purity were combined—there being a complete balance between mind and body. He led a life of prayer, contemplation, austerity, benevolence, and benign activity. He was enabled to put forth a magnificent claim as a man, a prophet, a teacher, and a healer—yea, even as the Messiah, the long-expected representative of God on earth to His chosen people. He thus brought Himself *en rapport* with His patients, and exalted faith, hope, expectation, and devotion to the highest degree. He projected Himself, as it were, into the sick person—in a word, bore his sickness. He caused those whom He addressed to make a supreme effort; which, of itself, would avail to relieve the tongue-tied, or to remove any obstruction which clogged the system.

We proceed next to touch upon a very obscure subject—the effect of mind on mind, of will on will. In the ordinary operations of our daily life the strong-willed and assertive naturally overbear, coerce, and direct the weaker brethren. Hence arises the power of the philosopher to convince, of the orator and divine to persuade. It is not altogether due to the arguments addressed, for the majority of men cannot understand an argument

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—the natural tendency of argumentation being to confirm the wrong-thinker in his delusion. The effect is due rather to the force of will-power—of mental *vis viva*, or dynamic energy. There are many weaknesses in the system called Christian-Science, but its insistence on the control exercised by the mental over the physical organism is well worthy of consideration and application.

In extraordinary cases, the same fact is manifested here and there, now as then, in a manner which unfortunately lends itself to quackery, deceit, and fraud ; but these cases contain within themselves phenomena worthy of careful and persistent study on the part of the physician, mentalist and divine. Such may be classed under the heads of :—

- Thought Transference ;
- Hypnotic Suggestion ;
- The Dream State ;
- Mesmerism ;
- Clairvoyance ;
- Spiritism ;
- Second-sight ;
- So-called spiritual possession ;
- Animal magnetism and electric phenomena ;
- Telepathy.

CURES WROUGHT AT A DISTANCE

Such records need present no peculiar or additional difficulty to those who recognize the supremacy and infinite distance of mind-action, and its superiority to time, place, and space.

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Whilst fixed to one spot on earth the mind can range freely from infinite past to infinite future. It can dwell upon the possible condition of a friend at the Antipodes, or (with a glance) project itself into infinite space and behold the farthest star ; and all this whilst returning in due course to that body which is its home. Nightly, it is lulled to rest, but with the morn its powers are restored—fresh and clear. It is driven out by disease, but returns to its original house when relieved of the distemper.

We have a physical analogue in the wonders of wireless telegraphy, whereby a message can be sent through the air for thousands of miles, in spite of intervening mountains ; or (as we have known for many years) can be transmitted along a wire, and (to complete the circuit in every case) through the solid globe itself.

Furthermore, consider the passage of light through the celestial ether, of sound through the air, and the wonderful attenuation of Matter as illustrated by the diffusion of perfumes.

DETAILS OF MIRACLES

It is instructive to look at the various miracles somewhat in detail. Naturally, by the Evangelists, the most important individual instances only are given as typical of the numbers actually wrought—*en bloc*, as it were—when large gatherings were assembled. Only a very small part of our

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Saviour's earthly ministry is brought before us. Undoubtedly, many other works were wrought as full of interest as the few actually set down. Those recorded are mainly works of mercy ; they are alleged also to possess a moral significance as signs and wonders advanced in support of the doctrine preached. Each class of miracle was designed to teach a lesson of its own ; the cleansing of the leper typifying the release of the sinner from the defilement of sin ; the giving sight to the blind, the opening the eye of faith by Him who is the Light of the World ; the raising of the dead, the power and potency of a new existence like unto that realized by Himself Who was to be the Resurrection and the Life.

Most of the miracles are represented as having been worked directly by Jesus ; but in those appertaining to the Draughts of Fishes and the Finding of the Tribute Money, human intervention was employed ; that, however, does not affect the action of the First Cause, and needs not to be taken into account in this essay.

The Miracles of Nature are as follows :—

Turning Water into Wine (an effective contrast to the first Miracle recorded as wrought by Moses—the turning of water into blood).—Stilling the Tempest.—Feeding the Multitudes.—Causing the Draughts of Fishes.—Providing the Tribute Money.

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ILLUSTRATION OF THE LAW OF VARIETY IN NATURE

In respect of the turning water into wine, the change merely anticipated that which takes place yearly in the vine, when the water derived from the soil and atmosphere circulates in the stem and branches, ultimately becoming the juice of the ripe grape in the cluster. There took place at Cana, instantaneously, that which requires many weeks to accomplish in the ordinary operation of Nature. "The water saw its Lord, and blushed." But what do we know of time? It is *sui generis*. To the Master, everything is present at once. As far as regards ourselves, time can only be defined in relation to the succession of events. If there be no succession, there is no interval—no *time*. We are called upon to assume that (in the case before us) the succession was quickened. What degree of interference this indicates with the operations of Nature, we cannot estimate.

We allow that the chemistry of wine is different from that of water, or, rather, that certain components are present in one which do not exist in the other; but (with regard to the apparent differences between different substances of organic origin) it may be that the constituent atoms are diverse in ultimate analysis, whilst the particles of which they are made up are merely centres of force of the same numerical value, while arranged

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somewhat differently in geometrical form—five centres, *e.g.*, being, in one case, in the form of a five-pointed star; in another, in the form of a square, with one centre located at the intersection of the diagonals.

Possibly, all other miracles in this class may be explained by supposing a prescience due to a keen sight, or to an eye endowed with what may be called X-ray power. With a special mechanical apparatus of that kind it is even now possible for an ordinary person to see through the human body, to observe the position and action of the internal organs, and so on. Much may be learned in this way of the seat of accident, obstruction, and disease—much of the best mode of effecting relief and cure.

The above suggestion may be extended to embrace the possibility of a knowledge of the weather, and the signs of the approaching exhaustion of a tempest. Further, in this case, a calm, determined, authoritative, manner would avail to reassure a demoralized crew, and to call back the bravery and self-command lost for the time, whilst the Master was asleep.

The same far-seeing glance would render it possible to observe the position taken up by a great shoal of fish. A similar remark may apply to the single fish caught by Peter for the payment of tribute; though not, we must admit, to the coin in its mouth. If, however, we were permitted to assume that the fish was sold for that sum (an exorbitant price, by the way) the case would be met.

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ILLUSTRATION OF THE LAW OF MULTIPLICATION IN NATURE

Strauss considers that the Feeding of the Multitudes was brought about by the imitation on the part of the crowd of the unselfish behaviour of our Lord and His Apostles in rendering their own store available for the general good. The cases differ from the miracle at Cana in respect of the fact that, in the wilderness, a multiplication—a new creation—took place ; whereas, at Cana, there was no change in volume. In our endeavour to find an explanation, we are seeking to evade the scientific difficulty caused by the idea of the creation of new matter, and of the breaking the sequence of cause and effect.

Perhaps this explanation may be found in the attribution to our Lord, of the power to materialize the elements of oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, &c., already existing in the atmosphere, so as to supply the amount which was lacking in respect of the loaves and fishes. There are to be found, ready to our own hands, in the atmosphere and the ocean, immense reserves both of food and fuel—our two great necessities of life, the natural stores and deposits of which are being rapidly exhausted. The fertility of our soil naturally deteriorates, and the denitrification of large tracts of country in old time in the neighbourhood of populous places, such as Babylon and Nineveh, contributed in large measure to their depopulation, and to the

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overthrow of the empires to which they belonged. Again, our carboniferous and oil-bearing strata are but partial, and there are doubtless immense tracts under the sea which must for ever remain unworkable. These strata—as well as existing forests—are being exhausted at a rapid rate. What is to happen when the process of depletion is extended? Whence shall we obtain fuel to drive the locomotive, and to cause leviathan steamers to plough the ocean? The answer is—in the production of oxygenous, nitrogenous, and carboniferous elements from air and water. This process of materialization constitutes the most tremendous problem for the twentieth-century chemist and physicist, but some such process will be absolutely necessary for the advancement of civilization, and the conservation of the race.

May not our Saviour in the desert have anticipated the impending discovery?

MIRACLES ATTACHING TO CHRIST'S OWN PERSON

Walking on the Sea.—Escape from the Nazarenes, and from the Jews generally on various occasions.—Transfiguration.—Appearances after Resurrection.—Ascension.

Certain individuals claim to possess strange powers of levitation. The Psychological Society and a few eminent scientists have instituted inquiries into this phenomenon, and into so-called spiritualistic powers generally; and have pleaded that, for

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the present at all events, we should keep an open mind on the subject. Doubtless, there are many points in relation to such phenomena difficult to account for or explain.

In our present life, we are restricted to space of three dimensions. After death we may be translated into four, five, or even n dimensions. What possibilities are not involved in this new state, in respect of the enlargement of our powers and the quickening of our senses? What if Jesus, as the New Man, possessed and exercised (within the limits made possible by His natural body) some of the attributes, powers, and extensions which we ourselves may be permitted to exercise in a higher form of existence?

Further, the constitution of matter and dimensional space are both hard to realize. We are acquainted with the nineteenth-century ideas concerning matter and its accidents, such as Extension, Weight, Colour, &c. Likewise, we are familiar with the mode in which we apprehend these accidents—viz., through the avenues of the Senses. The ideas entertained by scientists a comparatively short time ago have been considerably modified of late owing to the researches of Prof. Sir J. J. Thomson and others. Material conceptions of infinitesimal particles cohering to form a solid body, are giving place to a theory whereby each atom is regarded as a centre of electrical force and energy. This theory is elastic—nay, spiritual. It renders more easy, and at the same time more difficult, the realization

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of a complex organism such as the human body, when regarded as the physical basis for phenomena associated with life, thought, feeling, and will-power.

If we were permitted to assume that our Lord lived His human life in extra-dimensional space—say, of four dimensions—so that the particles of His bodily frame and His bodily senses possessed powers and a degree of sensitiveness which we at present lack, then these suppositions would account for all the phenomena under this head. *E.g.* what a difference would it not make to our capacities if the penetrative powers of our senses were doubled or trebled in intensity!

Very remarkable results are stated to be obtained by Hindoo wonder-workers, such as climbing a rope of which one end is thrown into the air. This feat would tend to revolutionize all our ordinary ideas of gravity, and the only explanation that seems to fit the case leads to the suggestion that the bystanders are simply hypnotized, so that they see not, but are made to entertain the belief that they actually behold what the wonder-worker wishes.

THE DEAF AND DUMB

Congenital dumbness is almost invariably the concomitant of deafness—*i.e.*, if a subject cannot hear sounds he cannot reproduce them. Deafness alone can be caused by disease of the outer or middle ear, adenoid growths, the plugging of

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the Eustachian tube, or some similar cause. Frequently the removal of these causes is an easy matter.

In Mark vii. 31-37, the deaf subject is said to have been tongue-tied in addition, so that the cure necessitated the string of his tongue being loosed. If the "tongue-tying" be not a figure of speech, it may refer to a disability not uncommon amongst young children, but capable of being remedied by an operation of the simplest character. In Matt. ix. 32 (perhaps relating to the same man) the subject is said to have been affected by a devil, probably a *façon de parler* to express the feeling induced in auditors by the strange sounds—hoarse attempts at speech—invariably emitted in such cases. In instances of this kind the miraculous element would be constituted by the *immediate* influence on the brain matter, on the intelligence, on the sense of language, on the meaning and discrimination of words and their collocation into sentences, as well as by the physical co-ordination of the various muscles and organs producing speech. All this would necessitate the imparting to the individual, in a second of time, the experience an ordinary person accumulates by painful endeavour during many years. In regard to such a mode of miraculous interposition we are at fault, inasmuch as we cannot explain, on rational grounds, the instantaneous gift of such a faculty.

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THE GIVING SIGHT TO THE BLIND

By reason of the glare, the dust, and the uncleanly habits of the people, blindness is very common in the East. Jesus is reported to have wrought many miracles of this kind, with a particular reference to Himself as the Light of the World.

Two of these cases present features of peculiar interest; one recorded in John ix. 1-7 as having been wrought on the Sabbath; where the man is represented as being blind from birth—as having had his eyes anointed with spittle—as having been sent to wash in the pool of Siloam. As is customary with S. John, the attendant circumstances give rise to a pointed discourse on the part of our Lord.

From the circumstance that the man was blind from birth, it follows that the eyes themselves were defective or lacking altogether, or that the optic nerves were practically non-existent. The anointing with clay moistened with saliva would have no influence tending naturally to re-create the structures or the nerves, being intended solely to influence the mind of the sufferer and to stimulate his interest, faith, and obedience. The same may be said of the washing in Siloam. Such a course might be palliative—it could not be re-creative. May we here again predicate a materialization of matter whereby the necessary structure might be constituted? If not, the case fails under our present analysis.

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The second instance is remarkable, inasmuch as it is the only one on record possessing a progressive character. It is narrated in Mark viii. 22-26, where, it is said, they bring to Jesus a blind man whom He leads out of the town. He spits on his eyes, and puts His hands on him, asking "if he saw ought." He looked up and said, "I see men ; for I behold them as trees, walking." After that, He again put His hands upon his eyes, and made him look up. Then was he restored and saw every man clearly. Hence, the miracle was wrought in steps—a unique case. This instance presents not so many difficulties as the last, inasmuch as the blindness may have been partial, of late issue, and the outcome of some sudden attack ; so that the sufferer may have reached adult age (nigh unto the number of his years at the time of his cure) in full possession of the faculty of sight, and of all that that faculty involved.

There are two lines along which the power of seeing proceeds—the one, mechanical or physical, the other, mental. First, the mechanical apparatus must be perfect. But, even when this is the case, the nerve impulses conveyed to the cerebrum can be interpreted only after a long progressive period of educative effort, induced by observation, comparison, tactile experiment, and ever-varying success and failure. If, *e.g.*, a subject were born with a double cataract, and he were couched for this cataract in adult life, and supplied with artificial lenses, he would still be unable to see as we understand it—*i.e.*, to see surrounding objects

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in their proper form, distance, solidity, and so forth. The visual impressions made on his brain would be confused and contradictory. He would have to commence his seeing life even as infants commence theirs. They cannot see external objects as their elders behold them—witness their frantic plunges and ineffectual grasping at real objects, in places and at distances where they mistakenly suppose them to be. In ordinary cases, after the gift of sight, a man blind from birth would be required to pass through months of experiment and educative effort before being enabled to arrive at the certainty of tactile and mental adjustment, such as ordinary sighted persons possess.

Naturally these considerations were absent from the minds of the Evangelists and of those eye-witnesses from whose narration they compiled their Gospels. To them, the mechanical and outward was everything—to us, it is the least essential part. Obviously, it is easy to say that He Who perfected the material organism with a word, with a word could also perfect the mental adjustment, and thus confer full power to see. We are not, however, considering the matter from the easy side, but are endeavouring to find a scientific explanation of the *modus operandi*.

This may be the place to bring out a fact that has to be taken into account in many of the Old Testament and New Testament miracles—viz., the use by the agent of a vehicle of healing. In certain cases, such as the recovery of the axe-head by Elisha, there is no connection between the loss

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and the restoration, but this connection is manifested in another of Elisha's miracles, that of purifying the waters. (2 Kings ii. 20. We are taking the literal record here.) A classic case is brought before us in 2 Kings xx. 7, where, to effect Hezekiah's cure, Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs ; and they took and laid it on the boil and he recovered." A remedial agent like unto this would operate in two ways: first, by reason of its own emollient or healing tendency ; secondly, by reason of the faith of the patient in the judgment of the physician, and in the innate efficacy of the agent the latter would see fit to prescribe as the vehicle of the cure.

It is to be observed that, in many cases, the action of medicaments is not direct, but of such a kind as to enable the forces of Nature—which are ever striving to expel evil elements from the system, and to bring recuperative forces into active operation—to exert themselves to the greatest profit and advantage.

With reference to our Saviour, insistence is laid on the fact that virtue resided in His saliva—in the skirts of His clothing—in every case, that this virtue proceeded from Himself. In some instances, He accentuated it with other elements such as clay, laid on the eye-balls of the blind—markedly so in this case, as the senses of touch and hearing were alone available—to call the individual's attention unmistakably to the incidence and operation of the healing art of Jesus. In other cures, He sent the sufferers to a source associated in the

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popular mind with numberless cases of a wonderful and, in their eyes, semi-miraculous nature. In the case of the Pool of Bethesda it has been conjectured that specific healing virtues were associated with its waters.

This part of our essay opens out an important subject, viz., that of the use of some outward element—such as unction—by the early Church, as exhibited in S. James's Epistle, v. 14. The object and end of this cannot be touched upon here, the matter being adverted to only that it may furnish an opportunity of expressing regret that the Church of England at the Reformation, doubtless led thereto by the wrong view taken of the matter by the Church of Rome, discontinued the use of unction, thus depriving her ministers of a powerful means of impressing the mind of the sick, of hastening a cure, and also of displaying the fact that the work of the fully accredited minister of God is a double work (even as set forth in the lives of Jesus Christ and His Apostles—a work to be exercised simultaneously on body and mind) intended to combine the ministerial forgiveness of sin with the ministerial agency of the cure of the body, thus recognizing the interaction of body and mind. In consequence, a formidable weapon has been taken from their hands—the value of which is recognized by the Faith-Healers and Christian-Scientists of the present day. This weapon tends to give to these communities their *raison d'être*, and to render such measure of success as they can claim, in spite of their many

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failures and their theoretical unsoundness in the faith.¹

After all, though so many faith-healers are impostors—conscious or half-conscious, or self-deluded—the thing itself contains an element of truth to which both the medical profession and the Christian Church too obstinately close their eyes. The mechanism of faith-healing is the same wherever it works—whether at Epidaurus or at the famous shrines of India, or Mecca, or Lourdes, or St. Winifred's Well—whether it is exercised by medicine-men, marabouts, yogis, fakirs, canonized saints, or Christian-Scientists. For the working of the miracle of cure by faith, a proper selection of cases is essential. Even Mrs. Eddy does not profess to mend broken bones; in fact, she is shrewd enough to make no claim of healing power over diseases or injuries that lie within the domain of surgery. It is in the almost undiscovered country of pathology, where lie the dark places of nerve diseases—as to which the ignorance of science is but thinly disguised by such names as hysteria and neurasthenia—that faith-healing finds its field of operation.

Doubtless, imposture may be a large element in faith-healing; but it is unquestionable that, in the cure of certain kinds of disease, it represents the working of a real force of which little is at present known. Sir B. Brodie wrought many miraculous cures in patients who had been bed-ridden for years from supposed paralysis by

¹ *Vide* extract from "Practitioner," in *Globe*, June 1, 1901.

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simply bidding them get up and walk. In the same manner, every physician could work miracles if he knew the way to set about it. Charcot states that he often sent patients to Lourdes when he himself had failed to inspire them with the requisite amount of faith. Hypnotic suggestion, so far as it has any effect in curing disease, is a form of faith-healing. In all varieties of the process, the patient—in the words of Macbeth's physician (in this case, again, how wonderful is the penetration of Shakespeare)—ministers to himself; it is his faith which makes him whole. The shrine or the amulet, the darkness and the light, the word of power, the antics of the medicine-man of a primitive civilization, or the ministrations of the priest or the doctor of the twentieth century, are but the instruments—*ab extra*—that set in motion the force which quickens into new life the nerve that has ceased to convey the behests of the will. In cases of like character exactly the same mechanism is seen at work under the operation of fear or strong excitement of any kind. There is a story in Herodotus of a king's son who had been dumb from birth, but who found his voice when he saw his father about to be slain. Abernethy says: "You may see a person with gout who is almost unable to move with pain; but produce a shock on his nervous system by telling him that the house is on fire, and he will scamper about like a lamplighter." That is to say, disperse by some means the concentration of thought that is produced by certain local symptoms, and, for the

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time, the sensation of pain vanishes. In a similar way, by dry shampooing the head—or one specific part of the body, when naked—the general sensation of cold is reduced.

John Hunter states that even tumours have yielded to the stroke of a dead man's hand—such has been the impression made on the mind of the sufferer.

In this way, the unspeakably filthy medicines of the Middle Ages, and even of a hundred years ago, as well as the quack medicines of to-day—many incapable of yielding any reaction whatever of a chemical kind—may have done good and may do good still.

As an aid to Nature—the declaration is the merest truism—faith is the essential element. This has a good side, but also a bad side. The latter is exhibited in the profound dependence placed by all classes of the community on quack doctors and quack medicines. The matter cannot be entered upon fully here, but it is of considerable importance to the community; and every public teacher should feel obliged to master the salient facts of the case—relating to the composition of quack medicines (sometimes containing ingredients of an innocuous, but, more frequently, of a harmful tendency—in both cases to be deprecated) and to the immense sums of money wasted, even by the poorest, in their purchase.

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THE SOLITARY SURGICAL MIRACLE

There is but one surgical miracle recorded—viz., the healing of Malchus's ear. In Matt. xxvi. 51, there is mention of the hurt, but not of the healing. The same may be said of Mark xiv. 47, and John xviii. 10. Thus, the earliest and latest Gospels are alike silent as to the miracle; but S. Luke the physician (who gives us, more than once, graphic touches relating to miracle stories, thus reminding us of his professional origin—*vide* viii. 43) records (xxii. 51) that Jesus answered and said unto Peter, "Suffer ye (the outrage) thus far," that He touched the ear of Malchus, and healed him.

This miracle may illustrate a mode of the working of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, viz., by what surgeons call "first intention"; i.e., if an injured cuticle or member be at once replaced in its original position, and septic conditions prevented from arising, a union would soon be effected.

CLEANSING THE LEPER

From all other diseases, leprosy was selected as the type of a spiritual distemper—the defilement of sin. The reasons for the selection are not far to seek. The complaint was obvious. In the worst cases, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there was no soundness; it unfitted for society and the duties of daily life.

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It varied in intensity, affecting likewise houses and clothing as well as individuals. It is debated if it were contagious, though it is probably communicable to others placed in like circumstances. Futhermore, we read of a leper—Naaman the Syrian, in the full tide of a military career. Reasoning from Isaiah liii. 4, many Jewish commentators surmised that the promised Messiah would be a leper.

Two things are noticeable about the leprosy cures wrought by our Lord :—

1. He TOUCHED those afflicted—showing that He was indifferent, or impervious, to ceremonial defilement (Lev. xiii. 46).

2. In every case He commanded the sufferers—even the Samaritan—to go and show themselves to the priests, and offer for their cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them (Lev. xiv. 4, 10, 21, 22).

May this be interpreted to mean that, in such cases, the disease had run its course, or had become general; for, in the latter case, strange as it may seem, the leper was to be accounted "clean" (Lev. xiii. 13)?

Can we say that the individuals cleansed by our Saviour were in reality already fit to be restored to human society, but that their relatives were chary of facilitating their cure and of providing them with the accustomed offering; further, that the sufferers had not sufficient confidence to take matters into their own hands until the opportunity arrived when the great Master, by His touch,

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proved to the bystanders that there was no fear of contamination, and by His generosity supplied the means whereby they could make the prescribed gift?

The reason why they were commanded to show themselves to the priests—for these were the only instances in which such an exhortation was given—was simply that, in the Jewish society of that day, priests were the persons officially empowered to exercise the right of declaring the lepers clean, and thus of restoring them to family and social life.

CASTING OUT DEVILS

There are many references to this kind of miracle:—

Casting out of a simple devil: of an unclean spirit: of seven devils (though how the number was arrived at we do not know): of a legion: of a devil whose presence had induced dumbness.

Moreover, the healing of the stricken man or men of Gadara introduces us incidentally to one of the only two miracles of destruction attributed to Jesus.

The subject of demons generally, of demon-belief and worship, is large and complicated. In the days of yore, and in primitive society generally, there was a firm, an unquestioned, belief in the existence of evil spirits, in their powers to invade the earth, and to possess the bodies of men. The accounts given of our Lord's own sayings and doings in reference

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thereto, are couched in terms accordant with the ordinary belief of His time. At present, the belief in demons, devils, and Satanic influence (or whatever name may be used to characterize the prime-mover) has undergone a change. Many persons, indeed, frankly avow their disbelief; many hold their judgment in suspense; many orthodox Christians believe theoretically, whilst not suffering that belief to influence their practical life or conduct. For all ordinary purposes the belief in Satan and his angels has died out, or persists only in a Miltonic sense. A few writers assert that the times in which our Lord lived His earthly life were exceptionally wicked, so that Satan was then permitted to exercise extraordinary power. There is something to be said in defence of this hypothesis.

After the most careful study of the subject, most scientific thinkers are compelled to say that they consider the existence of evil spirits not proven—*i.e.*, it is conceivable that they exist, though their existence is not demonstrable.

To those who hold the literal and verbal accuracy of the Gospels, this statement must come as a shock. According to the record, it is incontrovertible that our Lord, by word and work, accepted the current opinion. This opens out the great question (which has so many forms, and contains within itself so many profound and far-reaching mysteries) as to the degree in which our Lord accommodated Himself to current beliefs, feelings, and modes of expression. It

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is a wide subject, and cannot be entered upon here. It is incontestable that He did so to a large extent, and that neither in science nor philosophy did He make a declaration in advance of His time. His discovery, His philosophy, related to morals and morals alone.

There is no doubt that the belief in the possession of evil spirits—undemonstrable, as we now believe it to be — has worked untold mischief, even unto the days of our fathers, and has been the cause of an infinite amount of suffering; also, that this belief has retarded (for long centuries) investigation into the sources and manifestations of insanity, and the remedial measures that might be found applicable. There is a conviction amounting to certainty in the mind of the scientist and alienist that all phenomena attributable to possession are explicable on the theory of mental alienation, of epilepsy, or the like—in other words, of brain arrest, or accident, or disease.

Let the phenomena related in the Gospel story be even superficially studied, and this result will be clear. The means adopted by the ancients to exorcise or subdue supposed spirits would be the best calculated to defeat their object—*i.e.*, they would represent the exact contrary of those adapted to the cure of the specific disease. What were those means? The sufferers were driven out of their homes and of the town in which they dwelt, and (with every form of attendant cruelty) relegated to a wild, rugged, barren, land; compelled to live amongst tombs; branded with

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ceremonial uncleanness, rendered objects of aversion to all who by chance encountered them; exposed to extremes of heat and cold, to hunger, thirst, and nakedness. Their movements were sought to be restrained by fetters and chains. In their desperation, they were led to cut themselves with stones—*i.e.*, to attempt suicide. *Vide* Mark v. 3–5. If all those tortures combined would not cause even a sane man to fall into dementia, one does not know what would !

It is important and interesting to observe that our Saviour's method is essentially the method adopted in modern times. Indeed, the modern means may be said to be based on those which He employed. *E.g.*, He drew near; He exhibited a calm demeanour; He threw upon the demented a steady glance (such a glance always exercising a great effect upon maniacs and all people beside themselves); He displayed a kind, sympathetic spirit; He spoke in a commanding tone; He persisted in His approach, notwithstanding their disclaimers; He sought to recall their individuality by means of the pregnant question, "What is thy name?" We gather that this query was addressed to various classes of sufferers—always with grave intent. He humoured the madmen's belief, and entered into their feelings; His action led to the removal of all restraint (in such cases restraint awakening a power of resistance—more or less marked). He sought to restore self-respect, so that ultimately we find the erstwhile demoniac sitting at His feet, clothed, and in his right mind.

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All who have visited asylums^{*} for the insane in any enlightened country, will know that all this is the very course now pursued. Read the revelations about our own Bedlams, even as late as the early part of last century (strange, by the way, that the name of Bethlehem—the birthplace of Christ—should ever have been coupled with such degrading and loathsome associations) and compare the mode of procedure there exhibited with that adopted in the asylums of to-day. The comparison will illustrate the change (not only in popular practice, but also in popular belief) between the days of our Lord and our own time. There is now an absence of all restraint and of all violence of treatment.

Naturally, even now, and at all times, sudden frenzies and paroxysms of acute mania must be provided against—but these are passing phenomena.

We must not fail to observe that the power of casting out devils was claimed and apparently exercised by certain men even in our Lord's day; inasmuch as this fact alone would give point to His question, quoted in Luke xi. 19, 20: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges; but if I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you."

This may be a fitting place to say that the method of analysis which we apply to our Lord's miracles may also be applied to other miracles recorded to have been wrought by His opponents,

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as above; or by His Apostles during His earthly life, or after His Ascension. In the case of the Apostles the power is said to have been delegated; but something was still left to their own personality. Occasionally their trust in themselves, or in the power conferred upon them by their Master, failed, so that the desired result did not follow, as in Matt. xvii. 19. In this connection, we may be usefully reminded of our Lord's declarations to them as given in Mark xi. 23, 24: "Whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." And in such passages as xvi. 17: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." These passages doubtless represent very well-marked traditions of our Saviour's declarations; but, according to the accepted methods of interpretation of the time, we may assume that the promises had reference rather to moral cures wrought by teaching and persuasion than to physical cures, or to calling back the sheeted dead to life.

What has been said with reference to the reform of procedure in respect of the insane might be repeated in respect of medicine generally. In time past, the practice of medicine was hampered and

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restrained in various ways—by ignorance, superstition, and the like. Unfortunately, the influence of the Church was not wholly exercised on the right side. In other words, it had departed from the example and practice of its Master, who combined, in His own Person, the simple and elemental offices of Priest and Physician, and that, too, in regard to medicine on its simplest and most natural side. In time, the offices were separated, and the differentiation has undoubtedly become over-accentuated. In the present day it is needed that the priest should be more of a physician, and the physician more of a priest.

There are various works—such as the strengthening of the palsy, the release of a woman bowed down with infirmity, &c.—that space prevents our dealing with. Each would appear to be open to suggestions like unto those made in respect of other cures.

RAISING THE DEAD

(Matt. ix. 18 ; Luke vii. 11 ; John xi. 43.)

These cases present less difficulty than might be supposed. There are three specific instances on record in our Saviour's life. Jairus's daughter was raised immediately after death ; the widow's son, when being carried out to burial, probably on the very day of his decease ; Lazarus, after he had been dead four days. Further, in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, we read : "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection,

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and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many." The latter series of incidents, however, occupies such an isolated position in the narrative, and is of so weird a character, that one forbears to comment upon it in this connection.

In the first two cases, our Saviour *touched* the deceased; in the last, He spake the *word* only. In the former, the difficulty presented is not so great as in the last. Trance, hysteria, or catalepsy seems indicated, and this is not an uncommon occurrence, especially in the case of young girls.

Usually, the ultimate cause of death is the stoppage of the circulation, following the cessation of the heart's action. If this be brought about by some well-ascertained cause, such as embolism or shock, the heart would stop at what is called, in mechanics, "a dead centre"; but, if even a slight external impulse were then applied, the obstructive element would be removed and, in time, carried off in the general circulation. It is unfortunate that the phenomena relating to death and to the gradual failure of successive organs in turn, have been so little noted or studied by physicians—one would have expected they would have been the subject of repeated and careful investigation.

The theory advanced in this essay presupposes that our Lord possessed a store of energy—what one may call, for want of a better name, "electric or personal magnetism." Even as is said in several of the narratives—"there went *virtue* forth from Him." We assume that this was

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due to His organization, His purity of life, His perfect health, His unique personality.

In the cases brought before us, we are justified in believing that His touch, His voice, or some emanation of His innate energy, communicated just that amount of dynamic force that was needed, at the moment, to set going again the machinery of life. It is interesting to note that He actually touched the maiden, in the second case that He touched the bier, in the third, that the friends of the deceased performed the mechanical part. In all cases, He appealed to the dead by word of mouth.

In numberless instances, we read that He laid His hands on the sick, the bowed, the paralyzed. This was no mere insignificant act, but it was intended to be ministerial; for in that way is grace invariably conveyed from the spiritually superior to the inferior—from the ministrant to the prophet, priest or king that is to be. Now we remember that electricity is communicated chiefly through *points*—in this case *the tips of the fingers*.

In all instances, the subjects operated on by our Lord were young. In the first two miracles, the interval between the passage of the spirit and its recall was so short that no post-mortem changes could have taken place. In respect of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth"; also of Lazarus, "This sickness is not unto death . . . our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Yet, even so, John remarks, "Jesus spake of his death," and,

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further—"Then said Jesus unto them, Lazarus is dead."

With regard to Lazarus, it is probable that neither Jesus nor His disciples drew, or would draw, the nice distinctions *we* draw between death and the states which simulate it. Martha's remark as to the signs of death certainly points to an inference rather than to observation. One would be inclined to suggest that the mind of Jesus was, in some way, in touch with that of Lazarus; that He knew when Lazarus had apparently died—knew that he was not completely dead, but that He only could bring him back again to life, so that without His intervention Lazarus would die effectually in his tomb. This would seem to justify His statement to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead." The intense agitation of Jesus one would attribute to the effect the miracle required—His power being, in our view, not unlimited. He was, one would think, more or less in touch with Lazarus all along, but the getting full control over him may well have been no easy matter. During this time of agitation, Jesus was doing the preliminary work of getting Lazarus ready to come when called.

THE TWO MIRACLES OF CAUSING DESTRUCTION

These do not present much difficulty. We note that they were wrought in respect of the lower animals, and of inanimate objects—not on human beings.

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In the first—the destruction of the swine—we can well imagine that the unexpected advent of our Lord and His Apostles into that wild and desolate region, attended perhaps by a few excited villagers, coupled with the general interest and curiosity called up by the proximity to the demoniacs, would have caused the keepers of the swine temporarily to forsake the herd under their charge. What more natural than that this general agitation and scurrying of persons hither and thither should have communicated itself to the swine ; and caused first one, then another, finally the whole herd (for we know how creatures such as sheep and swine blindly follow one another), to stampede in a rout so blind and headlong that ultimately they were unable to stop themselves, and were consequently engulfed in the waters of the lake ?

In reference to the fig tree, we assume that the penetrating glance of our Lord (of an exceptional character, as has been said) had already discerned in the tree signs of weakness and disease, so that He would feel justified in anticipating and prognosticating its speedy end.

MIRACLES WROUGHT AT A DISTANCE

Our advancing knowledge of science tends to reduce the improbability originally attaching to miracles of this description. We are now familiar with the action of imponderable forces, such as gravitation, light, heat, electricity and magnetism

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—forces or elements all capable of acting at a distance. Consider, again, the wonders of wireless telegraphy and the etheric waves thus set up, many miles in length, eventually vibrating across the broad ocean, penetrating mountains, or passing through the solid structure of the globe itself. Further, consider the powers of projection exercised by the mind of man, by way of suggestion and will-power. When we bear in mind these marvels, may we be not disposed to allow that the action of the mind and will associated with the phenomenal temperament of our Lord (the phrase may perhaps be pardoned) may well be conceived of as extending beyond Himself, and as being effectual to communicate psychic or odic force ?

As before remarked, whilst the spread of scientific thought and method tends to restrict in one direction our apprehension of what is popularly called miraculous manifestation and energy, a compensation is effected by the opening of our mind (as in the instances just noted) to possibilities and explanations hitherto unsuspected.

SUMMING UP

In this paper our object has been to occupy the standpoint of the modern scientist, in relation to the theories of development, conservation of matter and energy, and the like ; and (by means of what may be called—without offence—rational principles) to endeavour to explain the

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phenomena associated with the miracles recorded in the Gospel story ; bearing in mind, as has been said, the primitive character of the record, the lack of judicial inquiry and close observation associated with the narrators ; and, as a consequence, adopting the general statements and conclusions, whilst not attaching importance to verbal detail.

Even now we know so little about the laws of Nature ; the constitution of Matter, and the interaction between its several parts ; and, above all, the subtleties of the mind, and of the complex organism of the human system, that our starting point is uncertain. The discovery of new properties of matter, like unto those exhibited by radium (indicating amongst other things the liability of the primitive elements to decomposition), perpetually compels us to hark back, to readjust our position, and revise our theories. Moreover, we are certain that new properties still will be disclosed as the years roll on, so that it is impossible for us to feel we have solved every difficulty, or reached a final conclusion, in respect even of the most elemental fact in nature.

In considering all cases of miracle, one has to bring to the front a truth, almost entirely neglected, viz., that in respect of the operation of our Saviour's power on others, action and reaction were equal and opposite—*i.e.*, that the strength and life He gave to others, were derived from His own person, in some way or other, by loss of vital or electrical energy, by expenditure of thought, effort, skill, mechanical or will-power.

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In fact, it was in His case, as it is with all ministers of grace and healing in the present day.

Before any efficient result can be produced, there must be expended that amount of effort—of skill, &c.—that will just meet the case, that amount of good that will just balance the evil. It is as futile to expect people to be converted without effort, as it is to expect them to be healed without effort of bodily disease.

Virtue of some kind must go forth from the minister or healer, and the expenditure of material or spiritual agency must be exactly such as will meet any individual case. That theory disposes of the idea that Jesus wrought cures without effort and without loss to Himself. It explains also His exhaustion after such efforts, and His frequent and lengthened retirement to enable His forces, both spiritual and physical, to be recuperated.

We cannot help seeing that the condition of things, in that day, was such as to render miracle not only possible but inevitable—*i.e.*, miracle in the accepted sense—of the kind that we have been considering.

If these works had been wrought, on arbitrary principles, to bolster up a tissue of falsehoods, for personal gain, or for the gratification of malice, it would be different; but they were woven into the texture of the life of Jesus—they grew out of His character—they naturally arose out of His mission—they were calculated to sustain His contention and His claims.

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There is nothing illogical or unscientific in assuming that they were prearranged by the Infinite Love and Mercy of God, as precedent conditions of the establishment of the Kingdom; that they were essential to enable the Christ to obtain a hearing for the moral truths He came especially to enunciate and to be a witness to the great fact that body and soul constitute one man, so that what affects the body for good or evil, likewise affects the soul.

The fact that the opponents of Jesus also claimed to be workers of miracles, does not militate against this view.

Just as hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, so imitation presupposes the existence of something anterior and more precious—it does not lower the value of the original.

There is something to be said for the statement that the narratives at our disposal are simply the vehicle and mystery of a hidden truth—or, shall we say, the husk containing the kernel? Perhaps, however, the deeper view is the more correct and impressive—viz., that we only want more knowledge (such, in fact, as that to which we have already attained in regard to natural forces) to find out that what was done by our Lord was in accordance with the working of natural sequence, or law, in that region where the physical and the psychical spheres overlap.

After all, therefore, the popular idea of miracles has something to be said for it. The works *were* miracles according to our present knowledge.

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Thus the Higher Criticism bids us hold to our belief because of the spiritual and moral truths which are all-important to us in the struggle of the inner life, and wait patiently until further and more exact knowledge teaches us the *causes* of the outward phenomena around us and within—not only the *How* and the *When*, but also the *Why* and the *Wherefore*!

The chief evidential witness to us, in these latter days, lies in the parabolic teaching of the miracles—which is so strongly asserted by the Evangelists, especially by S. John—so that we finally take refuge in some such questions and answers as appealed to the Psalmist. “He that planted the ear, shall He not again make to hear?” “Or He that made the eye, shall He not again make to see?” “Or He that nurtureth the heathen, shall He not much more teach the people knowledge?—shall He not control, sustain and bless?”

The method of analysis pursued in this essay may not commend itself to those who are content to say: “The explanation of this is perfectly simple. Jesus was more than man, He was Divine. If you allow that there is a superhuman, a supernatural, element disclosed in one instance, you surrender the whole position, for what would be effectual in operating in one case, might be effectual in all.”

The effort may, however, approve itself to that increasing number who humbly try to learn something of the way in which God works, and of the

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mode in which He communicates His gifts to men. He condescends to work *by means*. If we endeavour to realize what these means are, it will tend to His greater glory, and to our advancement, not only in knowledge, but in usefulness. The acceptance of such theories as plenary inspiration leads to intellectual inertness and arrest of mental growth.

This essay can claim but to represent an honest effort to enlarge the scientific view ; and although the analysis appears to fail here and there, and sometimes, therefore, to render conclusions uncertain, yet that may not be because the analysis is of a wrong order, but rather because it has been applied by an imperfect hand. The investigation, however, is comparatively novel, and it may well be that others shall pursue it with a better chance of success.

THE CHURCH AND HUMAN THOUGHT

THIS Essay refers to Section B. of the Programme of the Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908, as set out below:—

SECTION B.—The Church and Human Thought—(1) Christian Revelation and the similar claims of other Religions. (2) (a) The Faith and Pantheism (*e.g.*, Hinduism and Modern Western tendencies); (b) The Faith and Agnosticism. (3) (a) The Faith and non-Theological Ethical Systems (*e.g.*, Buddhism, Confucianism, Secularism); (b) The Faith and Legalistic Systems (*e.g.*, Islam, Caste). (4) The Faith and Science. (5) Literature and the Press. (6) The Bible, how it ought to be taught.

In the first place,—What do we mean by the Church? Used in the above connection, the term signifies—the Anglican Communion at Home and Abroad—constituting a branch of the Holy Church Catholic. The phrase—the Anglican Communion—may further be defined in different ways—orthodox or unorthodox, indifferent or antagonistic—according to prejudice or predilection.

According to the orthodox definition, it would be said to be of Divine origin, the inheritor of the

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traditions and promises relating to the One Covenant Church of old time ; the channel of Divine Grace to man ; the keeper and witness of Holy Writ ; the sphere of action of the apostolic ministry ; the dispenser of the Sacraments ; the accredited witness to the faith once for all delivered to the Saints.

If this were fully assured and allowed on all sides, the Essay on its relation to the various divisions of our subject would not be difficult to indite. At all events, we will allow it to pass for the present.

At this point, the completion of our title comes in—"Human Thought" ; by which we presume is meant "*Modern Human Thought*"—*i.e.*, the particular phase of universal experience and expression which has emerged from the past, and holds the field at the present time.

The conception of Modern Human Thought introduces various considerations :—

(1) It enlarges the idea of a personal or a written revelation, and demonstrates the fact that there is, indeed, another revelation from the stars, from the rocks, as well as from the pages of a book—so that one's ideas respecting the personality and attributes of a Great First Cause necessarily receive considerable amplification.

(2) It calls into being the records of the past—historical, philological, archæological, and the like—and philosophizes as to the presence and action of God in Universal History.

(3) It engages in verbal analysis of the various writings which have come down to us in our

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Canon ; and, further, in respect of the Higher Criticism, it searches into the genuineness and authenticity of these compositions.

(4) It follows the scientific *method* in its investigations, and disengages itself from the mere authority or *ipse dixit* of any individual writer—however venerable his period or hitherto unquestioned his deliverance. It adopts the same principle in respect of any Conciliar decree or Canon usually received.

Thus, it no longer suffices to plead for our Faith the three requisites formerly deemed sufficient—viz., Divine Revelation, Universal Acceptance, in time Catholic Consent.

(1) Dogmatic teaching on these lines—save in respect of the young or unlearned—is discredited and, in some quarters, set at nought.

(2) This tendency is furthered by the fact that the Church of to-day is non-progressive, in fact, is hide-bound ; that candidates for her ministry are trained on mediæval lines, so that they look for inspiration to the past rather than to the present.

It were well—save for purposes of historical research—that most of the musty theological tomes to be found encumbering the shelves of our diocesan libraries were burnt at Smithfield by the Archbishop of Canterbury in person.

(3) The Church has made herself, her ministry, her offices, too cheap ; so that, *e.g.*, individuals use the words of the Common Prayer Book, in her daily services, in an indifferent and non-natural sense—those who are manifestly and avowedly

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casuals and aliens being treated to all the privileges that should be reserved for her true and loyal children. Indifferentism of this description readily matures into antagonism.

THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Practically, circumstances have insensibly led the Church to vary from century to century the meaning and interpretation of her formularies.

As a matter of fact, our conceptions of God and His universe, of the Creeds, of the cardinal doctrines of the Faith, are different to-day from what they were in the early centuries of the Church's history; or even when clergy of the present generation commenced their ministry. But this truth is not generally accepted. Orthodox theologians still talk of unchangeable dogma, and seem to regard it as a virtue that their first impressions should be preserved unchanged. In truth, that is their greatest condemnation. The world is advancing, science is developing, the individual himself is growing by cumulation of knowledge, and by exercise of faculty—therefore God is growing; inasmuch as every extended realization of God and of the religious idea must ultimately be subjective—every recipient ultimately making his own God.

One repeats, therefore, God is growing—by which is meant, that man's apprehension of God is growing. If development and world-growth be allowed to have their perfect work, a higher

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type of religion and service must ultimately be evolved.

But it must sorrowfully be admitted that in any effort to increase knowledge and faith the Church of the present day has but a small share ; her conception of twentieth-century problems being imperfect, her sympathies limited, her breasts dry, her energies mainly directed to sectional squabbles. At her worst, she represents the backwater of the River of Life—the full tide flowing on independently towards the eternal Sea.

We come now to consider the various subdivisions of our subject, which, for logical reasons, we will deal with in a different order from that in which they are set out in the Syllabus.

SECTION I.—THE FAITH AND SCIENCE

Who can read the history of the controversies of the past fifty or sixty years between theologians and scientists without feelings of astonishment and even shame ? Doubtless, the so-called defenders of the Faith merely expressed the traditional views held by the man in the street as to the Mosaic cosmogony, the Noachian Deluge, and the like ; but what then becomes of the contention that Theology is the Queen of the Sciences, and that it is the duty of the clergy to teach, as it is of the laity to learn ?

Theologians have entrenched themselves behind artificial theories of inspiration, impossible chronologies, literal interpretations of the poetic

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and metaphorical—as if one should yoke a cart-horse to the chariot of the sun!—the worst aspect of the question being that there are many teachers and preachers still who, in these particulars, are centuries behind the times.

Honestly speaking, one does not see how we can deal with Science, unless we cut ourselves adrift from past prejudice and obstinacy—put on the white sheet of repentance—and tardily (as it proves) acknowledge the assured fruits of her labours, as they are garnered for each generation.

It is unnecessary to anticipate the objection that Science has erred and will err—that her way is strewn with exploded fallacies and discarded theories. True — yet her path has been progressive, just because she has acknowledged and profited by her mistakes.

SECTION 2.—THE BIBLE, HOW IT OUGHT TO BE TAUGHT

This section leads one to speak of the Bible and the mode in which it should be taught.

Herein, one pleads for a recognition of its place of origin, of its original appeal to the childhood of the race, of its progressive growth in morality and true religion, of its character as a compilation from traditionary records, of the obscurity of many texts by reason of frequent transcription, of the probability that (within limits consonant with the uniformity of Nature) there would also be a uniformity in respect of the operations of grace, thus leading to our

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reconsideration of the meaning and interpretation of such elements of the sacred story as miracle, prophecy, and the personal and objective dealing of the Divine with individuals.

One presumes that most Anglicans have given up Chillingworth's dictum that "the Bible and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants"—partly, perhaps, because we have resigned the name of Protestant, as not fully illustrative of our present position. To make the above-mentioned principle operative, it would require that an infallible Book should have an earthly infallible interpreter. The assumption that this was possible, led to the abuse of private judgment and to the multiplication of sects—inasmuch as each body of separatists appealed to its interpretation of the Bible and found therein—to its own satisfaction—a complete justification of its position.

We may now endeavour to put the Church in her proper place, viz., *first*—carrying the Bible in her hand, being constituted by God its witness and interpreter—able therefore to vary that interpretation according as more light is thrown upon its pages from century to century.

In respect of this conception of the Bible record, and the teaching of the same, an instructive object-lesson is furnished to us by the recent action of the Papal authorities in the promulgation of the Bull, *De Pascendi*. In her conception of the relation of the Church to the Bible, the Roman Church has always had a theoretical advantage over Protestant communities; but, in her blind

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hatred of modern philosophy and science, she has now given away her advantage, and cut herself off from the possibility of reform.

As teachers, we should naturally sympathize with any efforts made by properly constituted authority to keep pure and undefiled the sources of instruction provided for the flock; but in regard to this form of Papal action, we seem to have the right thing done in the wrong manner.

Even in the title applied to their crusade—an attack upon “Modernism”—they gave their case away, seeming to allow that the Church has no progressive message from her Divine Head to suit the varying needs of the ages, as these needs present new problems for solution. If the Papal protagonists laboured to insist on the preservation of *principles*, one might go a long way with them; but it is the very height of folly and that form of madness preceding dissolution, when eternal salvation is made to depend practically upon such slender and insignificant supports as, *e.g.*, the literal interpretation of the narrative found in Gen. iii.

SECTION 3.—LITERATURE AND THE PRESS

As regards the newspaper religious press, one cannot say much for the fairness or charity of our principal organs. The London and Provincial dailies and weeklies are largely run by persons indifferent or hostile to the Church—

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many being Radicals or Jews. Their use is sadly neglected by Churchmen ; manifold opportunities being hereby lost for counteracting evil and disseminating truth.

As for the religious book-press, the golden age has passed away, represented by giants such as Pusey, Keble, Christopher Wordsworth, Alford, Tregelles, Scrivener, Robertson, Vaughan, Liddon, Westcott, Hort, Lightfoot. The silver age has set in—there being few great theologians, preachers, authors, or hymn-writers of to-day.

It is unfortunate—from one point of view—that the largest and most important theological output of our generation is derived from German, United States, or British Dissenting sources.

Many books, tracts, parish magazines, put forth by the Societies, as well as by private individuals, are goody-goody, sickly, and sentimental, working out a false moral in a feeble manner. The process of evisceration practised by such societies as the R.T.S. in respect of the MS. of a new book on its presentation to members of a Committee of varying faiths, does not tend to fulness of teaching in regard to the Catholic Faith.

In many respects, in this particular, the children of this generation are more clever, more ardent, nay, strange to say, oftentimes, more manly than the children of light. Note the strenuous efforts put forth by the Rationalist Press to spread the writings of such sledge-hammer disputants as Huxley and Haeckel.

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SECTION 4 (a).—THE FAITH AND PANTHEISM (*e.g.*, HINDUISM AND MODERN WESTERN TENDENCIES)

As an introduction to this part of the subject, it is important to notice that our Church—as a Church—takes no official part in Missions.

Those of us who have visited Rome have been struck by the imposing aspect of that building across whose portals is inscribed: “The College for the Propagation of the Faith.” Considering the self-denying efforts put forth during so many years in the Mission Field by the Roman Church, it is not surprising that she has realized such remarkable results.

What a different state of things obtains in our own communion! With us, the work is left to semi-private initiative and energy. Is it wonderful that it has largely fallen into the hands of party societies? In some instances, their conception of the Church and their loyalty to her as their nursing-mother, may well be called in question. *E.g.*, a short time ago, the author received an invitation from the authorities of a Church Society, asking for prayers for the success of a Baptist Mission.

Needless to say, the request was ignored, seeing that, in the words of the ordination vow, one was pledged to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word—and, in one's humble judgment, the Baptist conception of our first sacrament comes under that designation.

One cannot help seeing that work in the Mission

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Field has been largely based on false considerations, viz., that all religions—save that derived from the Jews—are inventions of the Devil, and that consequently they must be destroyed, root and branch, in order that our Western ideas and systems may be rigidly and exclusively imposed upon all other nations.

All honour to those noble men and women who, during the past one hundred years or so, have left our shores, and willingly surrendered their lives in endeavouring to convert the heathen. Nevertheless, one cannot help seeing that the view they took of the heathen world was partial, and, consequently, untrue.

The study of Comparative History and Comparative Religion has taught us that every people, as, indeed, every individual, has a message for the world; so that, in no nation, and in no age, has the Supreme left Himself without a witness.

The true policy, then, is for missionaries to live amongst the people; and wherever possible—in spite of degradation and opposition—to study sympathetically their manners and customs, their history, and the history of their religious beliefs and practices, so as to find out the original root-ideas, to discover how far these coincide with, or differ from, our own; and how far they may be purified and made to carry a higher meaning.

The ambition should be not so much to force different peoples into the strait-waistcoat of *our* beliefs and prejudices, *our* modes of thought, government, and worship, as to develop their own

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peculiar genius and aptitude. In course of time, the spread of education and of science will naturally dissipate any grotesque elements which may be formed on such systems of religion as the Brahmanic and Hindoo. Further, the extension of common sympathy, charity, and respect, as well as even the mechanical facilities of transport, will tend to dissolve the bonds of caste.

The elevation of character one would desiderate on the part of our countrymen who bear the Christian name—our merchants, soldiers, sailors, civil servants, and tourists—should tend to convert these—one and all—into true missionaries. In the eyes of the native, the distinction between the missionary and the non-missionary—men of the same race, language, and religion—must often be very glaring.

It cannot be doubted that the abandonment and immorality—or even indifference to the ordinary offices and duties of religion—on the part of English travellers and seamen—all (so-called) Christians—in foreign ports has produced a feeling of astonishment and repulsion on the part of thoughtful and self-respecting heathen—and it cannot be doubted that there are many such, even amongst the uncovenanted—*i.e.*, all Gentile—nations.

The divisions of Christendom, too, furnish an object-lesson which the opponents of Christianity are not slow to observe and comment upon. Lastly—with the echoes of opium wars in China ringing in one's ears—one cannot absolve our own

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Christian State itself from duplicity and self-seeking.

One insists upon these truths in order to bring to mind the fact that our own people need to be missionized before—with a clear conscience—we can send out missionaries to the “poor heathen.”

One has often thought how grotesque it would be if representatives of Buddha or Confucius were sent to the New Cut, Ratcliffe Highway, the Seven Dials, or even to some of our country parishes, to teach such things as temperance, respect for parents, and the like!

The mental equipment of many of the early missionaries was of the most slender description. The Church sent out the youngest and least instructed of her children, instead of the most learned and practised. It is as if the War Office were to despatch to an arduous campaign the greenest of her recruits. They made the fatal mistake of despising those to whom they were sent; of openly displaying contempt for their religion and philosophy, and the modes of life based thereupon. To make the matter worse, this was done without overmuch study of the sacred books of those religions they so severely condemned, and without the slightest idea that these religions were, in most cases, centuries older than the Christian Faith.

As a matter of fact, many Brahmans, Buddhists, Confucianists, Mussulmans, are gifted with keen intellects; they are highly cultivated; they are learned in their language and literature; they can

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worthily sustain a serious disputation, and give good reasons for the faith that is in them. In spite of the innate superiority of the Gospel of Jesus, they must have succeeded in winning easy victories again and again over the early exponents of Christianity.

In respect of Pantheism—well, we are all Pantheists, more or less ; the difference between us and the Hindoos being that *we* should recognize the separate characterization of the Creator, and (within limits imposed by birth, predestination, &c.) of the individual, in the passing generations of men ; *our* object being to recognize a Law outside ourselves, and a subjective responsibility to obey that Law.

One presumes that the reference in the subdivision to modern Western tendencies is directed to such speculations as those included within the term—"The New Theology." Now, whilst feeling quite as strongly as the exponents of that system that the elements of our faith require to be re-stated and re-set, one disagrees with them in the conclusion that any prophet has yet appeared in their midst possessing the learning, ability, skill, or discretion to enable him to effect such a re-statement.

SECTION 4 (*b*).—THE FAITH AND AGNOSTICISM

As with Pantheism, so with Agnosticism ; we are all Agnostics to-day—if not, we ought to be. In a primitive state of existence, the idea

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prevails of a personal and particular interference of the tribal deity in every act and deed—however petty—of every individual ; of his warning by means of the eclipse, of his chastisement by the storm and the tempest. Naturally—for, at that epoch, the laws of the Universe were unknown, and the sequences of cause and effect entirely misapprehended or altogether hidden from view. On the other hand, whilst WE acknowledge—somewhat in like manner—the constant and unfailing action of the Supreme God, we are beginning slowly to apprehend, more or less intelligently, the *manner* of His working. We regard an eclipse as a necessary, periodic, harmless, astronomical event ; we forecast the storm, and hoist the cone or the drum accordingly ; at the first sign of personal infection, we send for the inspector of nuisances, we overhaul our drains, we isolate and cultivate the particular bacillus involved, and finally we inject into the sufferer the appropriate anti-toxin. Yet in all this we do not necessarily dispossess ourselves of the mental and spiritual idea of a Primal Cause, though, to the outward eye, we confine our attention alone to secondary causes and cures.

Many sequences have been already recognized, many more have escaped us thus far. It must, indeed, be admitted that Science, in all its branches, is still in its infancy ; but, concerning the unknown, the temper of mind of many Christians is still the same as that of the savage of old time. They are constantly bringing down “the God from the machine” to cut every knot

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and solve every problem as it arises. It reminds one of the manner in which the physiologists of old time cheated themselves *with a phrase*, when they ascribed the various changes taking place in the human body to "vital energy"—being sublimely unconscious all the time that they were thus simply begging the question.

In spite of the fact that the Almighty is still veiled in darkness, that we cannot attain unto logical or mathematical demonstration even of His person or of the simplest modes of His operation, such persons as have been indicated assume that they know all about these things; and—as if they were private friends or on intimate terms with the Great Unknown—pronounce confidently what His modes of thought and action must be. Surely, it is more seemly, more modest, more in accordance with the peaceful growth of knowledge from less to more for us to confess our ignorance, in order that we may be led to investigate the causes of phenomena, and finally to meet with our reward in being allowed to enter surely—if slowly—into our full heritage of knowledge.

It will be evident, on reflection, that the opposite course leads to apathy and fatalism; and that agnosticism—in respect of the unknown and the unproved—is the true attitude of the reverent student and worshipper. Naturally, if (in the face of the moral and scientific demonstration of any particular truth—scientific or religious) a man still says: "I will not believe," he is a fool,

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not a philosopher ; an Ignoramus, not a true Agnostic.

Personally—as learners—we lay stress upon the true connotation of the word in this connection—we write ourselves down as Freethinkers and Agnostics ; inasmuch as we cannot help feeling that our knowledge here below is but perfect ignorance ; and that all things in this passing show are but images of the true ; that so long as we are in this mortal coil, the conviction that we know a thing surely—that we have fully mastered a particular truth—is the clearest proof that we are mistaken. Certainty of thought is impossible—since finality is impossible.

SECTION 5 (a). — THE FAITH AND NON-THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL SYSTEMS (*e.g.*, BUDDHISM, CONFUCIANISM, SECULARISM)

Buddhism and Confucianism must be spoken of with respect, in regard both to the number of their adherents and to the simplicity, purity, and unselfishness of multitudes of their adherents.

Why—as in the case of Confucianism, Taouism, Shintoism, and the like—it has pleased Almighty God to suffer systems to prevail so long and so widely which ignore a personal deity, is one of those mysteries connected with the government of the world which, at present, must remain insoluble. Mayhap, it was to furnish an opportunity for the Christian Church to place a fitting superstructure upon that foundation,—a consummation which

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still lacks accomplishment ; although it may be observed that those systems—in their theory and practice—do not forbid such an eventuality.

The weakness of these purely ethical and secularistic systems is evident. Usually, the performance of a moral, non-instinctive act postulates three requisites :—

- (i) an adequate motive ;
- (ii) an adequate force ;
- (iii) an adequate end.

All purely ethical systems fail, especially in respect of the first and last of these requisites—viz., the motive and the end to be gained. They are limited by the sense of fitness of external things on the part of the individual actor, and of his conception of the limits of altruism—leading, at the best, to an imperfect apprehension of an imperfect obligation. No head of water can rise above its source. If one confines one's thoughts, activities, and aspirations to *man*, one cannot get beyond the limits which bound the life of man as an earthly being. One may try ever so hard to raise oneself from the ground by seizing oneself by the feet, but it will be found impossible to lift oneself up—yea, by even so much as the thousandth part of an inch.

At this point, spiritual evolution comes to our aid. The Christ-Man supplies what is lacking. He lifts to a higher plane this world and all things and all persons thereto attaching. In reference to the requisites for any act—however

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trivial or menial—He supplies and sublimates the motive ; He assists and heightens the expenditure of effort ; and through the media alike of a softened heart, an enlightened understanding, and a regenerated will, He furnishes the highest stamp of approval, and also a blessing and reward both present and to come.

It will be understood that these remarks also apply as a critique of Western Secularism as a system of ethics.

SECTION 5 (*b*).—THE FAITH AND SYNTHETIC SYSTEMS (*e.g.*, ISLAM, CASTE)

Mohammedanism obtained its early triumphs partly by reason of the virility and strenuousness of its promoters ; partly, because of the degradation of the faith of the Jews and Christians amongst whom it originated in Arabia. In its palmy days, it exhibited wondrous originality and vitality in respect of science, literature, and architecture, as well as of war and conquest. Even now, the degeneration of peoples professing the faith of Islam is much exaggerated ; *e.g.*, in the Levant, the comparison between Christian and Mussulman—represented respectively by the Greek and the Turk—is largely in favour of the latter. There are historical causes for this circumstance, into which we need not enter, but there is no doubt that the supple, pliant, cringing, Greek cuts a bad figure by the side of the full-blooded son of the Prophet. Further, it is only fair to say that the religious

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observances of Mohammedans are usually carried out with the greatest exactitude and with every evidence of sincerity.

It is interesting to note that a propaganda has been started in both divisions of the Mohammedan world, the Sunni and the Shiite, which will assuredly have startling effects, viz., that of Bábism in Persia, and that of Mohammedan missionaries round the western shores of Africa.

Until Christendom is purged, enlightened, and consolidated, there is not much chance of its converting the Moslem. At present, he exhibits the most savage bigotry and antipathy to Christianity ; and there is some excuse for this feeling. The dealings of the European Powers and of the authorities of the Balkan States with the “unspeakable Turk” are not such as to impress his mind with due conceptions of Christian honesty, charity, courage, or wisdom. Further, the manifest and recurring extravagancies and jealousies of Christian sects—even in the Holy City itself—must tempt the unbeliever to say with bitter scorn : “ See how these Christians love one another ! ”

SECTION 6.—CHRISTIAN REVELATION, AND THE SIMILAR CLAIMS OF OTHER RELIGIONS

This has been incidentally touched upon under the preceding sections, so that nothing more need be said about it here.

THE REVIVAL OF ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

THE word Discipline has several meanings. It may refer to the regimen exercised by the individual on himself ; to that exercised by the official superior on the clergy of his diocese ; or by the Church, as a whole (or the minister, as the representative of that Church), on the sheep of the flock. It is in the last sense that it is used in this Essay ; in the same sense, in fact, as that in which it is employed in the Communion Service. At the beginning of that Office, reference is made to a godly discipline which, in the Primitive Church, was brought into operation at the beginning of Lent ; and utterance is given to the opinion that it were much to be wished that the said Discipline might be restored. This Introduction was composed in 1549, and, for three centuries and a half, the aspiration therein embodied has remained unaltered. Further, clergy and laity alike acquiesce in the acceptance of this state of things ! Why ? Is the present condition satisfactory ? Is the absence of discipline a proof that no discipline is needed ? Is it expedient that we should remain passive, rather than take stock of our position and strive to elaborate a workable system for differentiating between the sincere believer and the barren

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professor? Has private effort on the part of the clergy dispensed with the necessity for public and corporate action? On the other hand, Is the renewal of Ecclesiastical Discipline desirable? Can anything be done, as the result of a quickened public conscience, and of the successive waves of feeling—Evangelical, High Church, Ritualistic, and Broad Church—which have swept over the community during the last hundred years?

Bishop Barry says: "In early times, public Confession and Penance were inflicted on notorious offenders, especially at the opening of Lent, with a view to absolution and restoration to Communion at Easter. This gradually gave place, first, to private confession to a Priest especially appointed and termed a Penitentiary (beginning in the case of sins of which it was a scandal openly to speak); then to systematic Private Confession and Absolution, made a regular part of Christian life, and a necessary element in the preparation for the Holy Communion; this last mode of confession being subsequently exalted by the Mediæval Church to the name and dignity of a Sacrament. When Auricular Confession was abolished as an obligation, our Reformers of the sixteenth century, being still stern upholders of discipline, desired (even as this Introduction shows) to return to the substance of the primitive practice. Finding that course impracticable under the difficult circumstances in which they were placed, they inserted this solemn service of warning (in the rubrics of 1549, appointed to be said on Ash Wednesday only; but

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in those of 1552, at divers times in the year), falling back, at the same time, on the General Confession and Absolution as the rule, and on Private Confession and Absolution as the exception.”¹

In the course of three hundred and fifty years, conditions have vastly changed ; new ideas and forms have been brought into operation, affecting every department of political, social, and ecclesiastical life. Such are :—

1. The sapping of regal authority.
2. The destruction of the idea of a personal, constraining, and semi-infallible authority, such as the Papacy ; and the substitution—in part, of the secular arm ;—in part, of a Book—the Bible—which proved to be susceptible of as many interpretations as there chanced to be interpreters.
3. The abolition of the feudal system ; the extinction or modification of the old nobility ; the rise of a commercial middle class, wielding the power of the purse, frequently displaying violent prejudice against so-called sacerdotal pretensions or claims.
4. The spread of general education, whereby was reduced the intellectual chasm formerly existing between the clerk and the layman.
5. The growth of toleration and the concession of the right of private judgment.
6. The progress of Dissent, whereby were furnished a place of appeal and a haven of refuge to those penalized by the Church, or even rendered but mildly dissatisfied with their treatment within her fold.

Naturally, after the great crisis of the seventeenth century, during which the two great bodies of the English people were arrayed against each

¹ *Teacher's Prayer Book*, p. 172.

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other in civil war, deeds were done and memories implanted which vanity and prejudice are nevermore likely to forget.

An attempt was made by the original Reformers to enforce Discipline ; and, to that end, the Court of High Commission was founded in 1559. By that Court, all jurisdiction in spiritual things was vested in the Crown. Incidentally it was intended to exercise discipline over individuals. Originally it had no authority to fine or imprison. Under Charles I. and Archbishop Laud, it assumed larger powers than Parliament thought warrantable ; and, as the result of a complaint from that body, it was abolished in 1641.

Now, the Church being a spiritual community, and, as such, governed by spiritual or ecclesiastical laws, her discipline would naturally consist in putting these laws into execution, and inflicting the penalties or penances enjoined against the several sorts of offenders. This being allowed, we ask : "What indication, in the present day, does our Church afford of the particular sins or offences which should exclude an individual from participation in public worship or Holy Communion ?" "What penalties does she impose corresponding to the public admonition of the offender in the past, and the Greater or Less Excommunication ?" "What acts of public Penitence or Penance does she prescribe ?"

One admits that these questions sound antiquated and unreal. Is this a bad sign or a good one ?

As we know from the Scriptures, Acts of

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Discipline were frequent in the Jewish and Early Christian Church. In the palmy days of the Papacy, too, even princes and magistrates fell under the Church's public censure ; and, in respect of whole nations, occasionally, the dread interdict was brought to bear with crushing force. Moreover, in our own experience, Popes have held excommunicate Kings of Italy ; and, under the same system, a hold is still obtained over the individual by means of Auricular Confession and Private Penance (an instrument called, *par excellence*, the Discipline, being sometimes employed for the infliction of this chastisement). Even in the Roman Church, however, Public Penance has been allowed to fall somewhat into desuetude.

Further, amongst Protestants, the Wesleyan Body lays down certain laws as to membership, and keeps a hold over its members and their lives by means of Experience- and Class-Meetings. Most of the so-called Free Churches have analogous modes of procedure, though the rules of different bodies differ in degree of strictness. Thus, there are *General* Baptists and *Particular* Baptists—the latter section excluding from the Lord's Table any who are not enrolled as members.

Upon a review of the conditions obtainable in other bodies, we are constrained to admit that there is no communion in which there is so great diversity of doctrine, faith, and practice as in our own ; or where there is so much indiscriminate liberty allowed to the clergy, and so much licence to the laity. On these latter folk, allegiance sits

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but loosely. They come to Church or not, as they please; they come to the baptismal and marriage services without any specific inquiry being made as to the way in which they recognize this membership, or the rightful discharge of their duties. So long as they fulfil their legal and financial obligations, they are safe; and, at the end of their lives, they are wrapped in the fine linen of the Church's Service, although their degree of churchmanship (and often the very fact of this churchmanship) is unknown to the officiant.

There are, to be sure, our Ecclesiastical Courts; but these are mainly concerned with offences against morals, or lapses into unorthodoxy, on the part of the clergy. In some cases, the tables are turned, as between the clergy and laity. A few years ago, for instance, a parish priest was proceeded against by a parishioner for refusing him the Holy Communion on the ground that he did not believe in a personal devil. Certain other *causes célèbres* there are, but nothing that would illustrate the bringing to bear of ordinary discipline upon members of the flock. The writer remembers a case in which a parish priest, in the course of divine service, excommunicated with bell, book, and candle, a member of his congregation for persistent disobedience to his pastoral injunctions—but “one swallow does not make a spring,” and the stir created by his action demonstrated the infrequency of such a proceeding.

Modes of procedure and historical disquisitions relating to the general subject can be found in

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such books as Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*, Books 18 and 19 ; Martine's *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ratibus* ; and Maskell's *Monumenta Ritualia*, ii. 286 ; but there seems to be a lack of works dealing with the public witness of the Church as to her authority to look into faith and morals, to warn the offender, and to punish the recalcitrant.

Of course, the clergy act privately (and so far effectively) as disciplinarians ; but their hands are largely tied, because they have no rules laid down for their guidance, and no backing from the Church herself as a corrective agent. The utter abandonment of any test in respect of the qualifications of the individual for participation in public service and communion has led to a curious reversal of the fitness of things. Our Church Service is intended for the Children of the Church, yet (without regard to personal character) we beg all and sundry—we warn, threaten, cajole, and bribe them—to come to church ; in many ways, putting the cart before the horse and seeking for an effect apart from an efficient cause. It is clear that the Church does not look for conversion to take place in the act of service, but that conversion is presupposed. As the case stands, the church doors are thrown open wide ; any one who likes, even with the lowest motives, can enter indiscriminately, without question being raised ; the act itself is counted unto him for righteousness ; he is patted on the back, made to feel that he is a fine fellow, and that he has laid the Church and her minister under a deep obligation. Has not persistence in this

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course lowered the Church and even religion itself in the estimation of the working man ; who, like a spoilt child, has had all things done for him and paid for him for the sake of having in return his grudging word and infrequent patronage ? The question : “ Why does not the working man come to church ? ” merely ministers to his vanity. It is put in the wrong form. Who was it that said, “ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you ” (Matt. vii. 6) ? In like manner, the obligation to come to the Eucharistic Service, especially at Easter, is, naturally enough, emphatically laid down ; but, in some cases, in such wise, that the idea of a fitting state of mind and life is thrust into the background, so that the exercise becomes little more than a conventional, fashionable, semi-religious, dissipation. Clerical statisticians add up their “ communions ” with eagerness, and compare the sum total with that of past years, or of rival parishes. If this total be only sufficiently high, or the balance be struck in their favour, they are satisfied—they have reached the *ne plus ultra* of endeavour and success. Is it not legitimate, then, to conclude, without a breach of charity, that, in cases like unto these, quantity is considered rather than quality ; the form, the fasting, the several Points, the daily reception, rather than the substance, the true Real Presence—a too easy approach thus leading to a general lowering of the tone of religious life, and a degradation of the Sacrament itself ?

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Doubtless, it is easier to point out the evil and to ask questions than to suggest a remedy ; but (assuming that some of the theories on which present-day practice is founded are unsound, and that, therefore, this practice is imperfect) it must be conceded that the lapse of time will but make matters worse ; and that efforts should, at once, be put forth to lift up some higher standard than the present. In these latter days, instead of the Church converting the world, it is, in truth, the other way about. The Wesleyan Revival was a protest against a similar state of things a century and a half ago.

Obviously, it must be allowed that the individual witness of the parish priest is effective as far as it goes, and that it is exercised in the redressing of the evils of which we have spoken. Yet, nowadays, the methods of many a priest are secular, much of his time being taken up with matters only indirectly spiritual. Further, his intellectual status is more on a level with that of the average member of his flock, so that his influence, on this side, has changed in its incidence. Infallibility and intellectual aloofness are no longer conceded. Men challenge his reasoning and his conclusions, and defend their own position and theories—be they logical or illogical—on equal terms.

The status, too, of the Church as established, and the latitudinarian conditions of membership, hamper the discretion of the clergy ; as also do the existence and activity of powerful and aggressive dissent.

It may be conceded that the revival of Discipline may be deprecated by reason of its

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impossibility, or of its inexpediency—but ought these words to be applied to Christian ethics and Christian duty? Is there nothing that the clergy, as accredited spiritual persons, could legitimately do? The one proof of the truth of religion is to be found in the fact that it is able to work impossibilities.

We venture to offer certain suggestions in the direction of effecting the desired object:—

(a) In the first place, an endeavour should be made to place the mission and authority of the Church in their true light.

We acknowledge the benefits derivable from the union of the Church with the State; but, in a spiritual sense, it has certain disadvantages. For instance, is not the acceptance of the position that every baptized person, *ipso facto*, is a member of the Church, and that considerations of membership are of a merely legal character, subversive of the principle that faith in the merits of a crucified Saviour furnishes, in the sight of God, the only qualification for spiritual union with His Church?

The Monarch may be styled the Head of the Church, Parliament may legislate for her government, but the Divine Headship must be emphasized if the ministers of God wish to have a justification for exercising spiritual authority over their people. Then, all things will fall into their due order. God will be set forth as the Source of Law; the Church, as the Channel, the Authority, to lay down limits, to determine forms of discipline; the Minister, as the Instrument; the flock as the subject; the mode of appeal as determined by the

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elements of our nature, as exhibited in the emotions, the conscience, the understanding, and the will.

In the Middle Ages, the Church became synonymous with the Papal Court—*that* was the infallible Authority which promulgated and interpreted edicts and formularies. Theoretically, this was perfect; but it was carried into practice with every accompaniment of greed, corruption, ignorance, and superstition. In our own country, after the Reformation, the Bible was exalted into an infallible standard; but it failed in this particular, inasmuch as every body of Christians found it could interpret disputed points in its own way. Man is ever seeking for an authority which is absolute, but we are now driven to rest upon a broader foundation. Thus, we have with us the Bible, in a legislative sense; the authority of the Church, in an interpretative and disciplinary sense; the conscience of all believers, in a judicial sense.

But we have to bear in mind the fact that, in the present day, the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Articles and Formularies of our Church, the Declarations of ancient Councils, yea, even the claims of our Church herself, are alike expected to justify themselves at the bar of reason—*i.e.*, of the conscience which is the sum of spiritual experiences, past and present, and the product of divine growth and evolution. Every age has its own mode of apprehending, realizing, and expressing truth and feeling; and it is the part of the accredited ministers of God to bring it about that this public judgment should be well informed and influenced by a righteous instinct.

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(b) We further suggest the possibility of associating with the incumbent a certain number of communicants in every parish—in effect, the Elders, both men and women—so as to form an inner circle, a kind of vigilance committee, each member of which binding himself to do his best, in every legitimate manner, to obtain the names of those who needed strengthening by reason of temptation to intemperance, immorality, backsliding, non-church-going, and to deal with indifference on the part of confirmees, or of lads and lasses just leaving the Sunday School. This Committee should meet periodically to take note of such cases, to exchange views, to set on foot remedial agencies, to offer united prayer for all concerned, to lead each other to private intercession, to arrange for systematic visitation, advice, guidance, and companionship.

Undoubtedly, the difficulties attendant on the formation and action of such a Committee would be enormous ; but, if some such plan be not started at once, these difficulties are likely to increase and prove insuperable ; even as the complexity of modern life, and the restlessness and dislike to restraint, alike increase. Again, the motives of those concerned would be liable to misconstruction and suspicion ; and opposition and ridicule would, at first, be provoked. Further, not only would there be danger from without, but also from within, inasmuch as there would be a fear of the meetings degenerating into places of gossip and scandal-mongering ; so that the utmost wisdom

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and circumspection would be needed on all hands, especially on the part of the inaugurator and director. Moreover, in villages it would seem to be impossible to gather efficient helpers ; but, on the other hand, in such places the flock is well under the purview of the shepherd. Even so, in town and country alike, it is to be apprehended that the happiest results would flow from a knowledge being induced on the part of the vacillating, the unruly, the tempted, even of the open reprobate and blasphemer, that a faithful band, moved by loving and long-suffering compassion, undaunted by difficulties and frequent failure, was persistently offering up petitions for them to the Throne of Grace, day by day, name by name. Prayer of itself would avail much on the part both of petitioners and of those for whom suffrages were offered ; for faithful prayer is effectual, not only as prayer, but also because it inevitably leads to active effort—prayer being the promise of work, even as work is the justification of prayer.

This proposal would seem to be rendered more acceptable by the fact that it would tend to involve the laity in spiritual work, a desideratum much to be sought after ; for it is well that the lay folk should learn something of the travail of the clerical office, and something of its difficulty ; thereby being taught the nature of the responsibility of—what may be called with truth and emphasis—the lay-priesthood.

Whether the above-named, or similar, plans succeed or fail, it should encourage us to remember that the original Gospel still remains, that

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our commission remains, that our function still has free exercise, that opportunities are provided for the National Clergy, a degree of authority being conferred upon them which ministers of all sects and bodies might well envy.

We have seen that (owing to various causes, partly legal—due to the Establishment; partly general—due to the growth of Dissent, of free thought, and of the relaxation of obedience) the ideal of godliness has been lowered; that the mixed multitude has overpowered the chosen people; that there have been indiscriminate worship and sacramental approach; that belief in the efficacy of the sacraments has been diminished; that participation in baptism and general communion has become a test merely of respectability, an expression of good-natured desire to be conventional, to do honour to the Vicar of the parish, or to some “churchy” friend, in acquiescence in what professionally such a one would naturally be expected to suggest; instead of what the attitude should be—the thankful and heartfelt realization of the Divine command, and the acceptance of a Saviour’s bounty. The difficulty is accentuated by the fact that we have not to deal, as in the epoch when the Communion Service was compiled, with a comparative handful of people in each parish—all of them under the rule of the Church, and outwardly, at all events, in obedient conformity with her rule and practice—but with overwhelming numbers, in all stages of ignorance and even hostility—rightly styled “the lapsed masses.”

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(c) Should not our teaching, then, be inspired with the feeling and conviction that this is a time embodying a distinct declension from the burning zeal and faith, ardent unto death, which distinguished the early ages?—That the Church of England needs to be recalled to a sense of her divine mission?—That we, who minister at her altars, need a fresh consecration to enable us to rise superior to ourselves, to secular calls, to domestic felicities or infelicities, to social amenities?—That, in respect of the controversies of the day, we should feel that we were not sent to reduce Christian doctrine to the capacity or the tolerance of the sceptic or the indifferent; but rather to display our best arguments in action alike consistent and Christ-like; there being no need then to ask the question, “Does that man believe what he is set to teach?”—That we should proclaim the Church of Christ, within the Church of England, as a true Society, possessing definite claims upon the time, money, faith, hope, obedience—nay, the whole life—of each and all of her members?—That we should cease to do or say anything to lead to the opinion that one day was holier than another, in the sense that public worship was alone possible for that day, or that church-going was the chief Christian virtue, and that its due performance covered a multitude of sins?—That we should revive interest in the work of sponsors, and find means for warning such as propose to take on themselves that office, and for persistently keeping before them the solemnity of the trust they were

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about to undertake (which, at present, is largely an empty form, being looked on merely as a conventional mode of satisfying the requirements of the Prayer Book, or, even in extreme cases, as a means of gain or an excuse for feasting)?—That we should take steps for ascertaining the position of those who come to be married, in respect of Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, and of other evidences of a serious life (the Church taking it for granted that the principals are communicants)?—That we should “fence the tables,” in the case of those drawing near to the Holy Eucharist, and warn off rather than invite?

We repeat that Church privileges have become depreciated in value by being made too common, and by being freely pressed on terms acceptable to the receiver rather than to the Giver. For example, it should be noted that great harm is done by promiscuous attendance at church on the part of the careless, the indifferent, the impenitent. The act of Confession with them is no true act, therefore the Absolution cleanses not; yet we permit them to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd”—“My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God.” We invite them to sing:—

“I faint, I thirst, I die, to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ for me!”

What blasphemy! What unreality in regard to themselves! What profanity towards God! What a deterrent to the would-be penitent!

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If the parable of the Tares and the Wheat be quoted against the position here assumed, or if the impossibility be declared of effecting a true severance between the sheep and the goats during the present dispensation, it may be replied that no interpretation of these allegories is justifiable which leads to a disparagement of religion such as we should all admit and lament.

As a matter of fact, our Common Prayer is not intended for the unconverted, but for the converted ; for those who, from their baptism, have obediently followed the rule of the Church. In respect of the indifferent, the invitation should not be addressed, "Come to church," but "Come to Christ." "Before you do this, stay away from church, it is not the place for you ; you have not learned the true prayer—the cry of the penitent. You cannot praise God." This is only another way of saying that our Church Service is unsuitable to the masses.

At the Reformation it was decreed that, at certain times, all men were bound to come to church ; recalcitrants being haled thither by the officers, and, in the event of continued disobedience, subjected to fine and imprisonment. In the present day, we recognize the futility of such a mode of procedure, allowing that it would lead to service unwilling, and therefore insincere, and to hypocrisy doubly distilled ; but it may well be questioned whether the moral suasion, now exercised to the same end, does not equally miss the mark through ignoring considerations

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like unto those advanced above. Most offensive are the smugness of demeanour and the patronage of the Church and clergy by those—whether adults or children—who are fought for in respect of Church and Sunday School by representatives of rival bodies. Depend upon it, we shall win the day by building up barriers rather than by throwing them down. A most painful effect has been produced on the minds of men—not altogether of the straitest sect—by the vulgarization of religion associated with the methods of certain well-meaning revivalists, not altogether outside our Church.

If a man have truly given his heart to Christ, his first question would be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" As a result, he would be forward to come to church, and to fulfil all the other obligations resulting from the new relation. He would not say, "How *little* can I do or give?"—but, "How *much*?" A revival within the Church must begin with the individual. From the consecrated individual, as from a centre, a spiritual impulse would arise in every parish to sweep away mere conventionalities, as well as to bring to bear upon the community a motive force which would be evidenced in clergy and laity—alike in public service and in private ministration.

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(d) EPISCOPAL HELP

Our bishops do not help us much. One must not be considered as wanting in respect in saying that they are now *prelates* rather than *fathers-in-God*; that their attention is almost exclusively occupied with parliamentary action, with questions of legal import, patronage, sequestrations, and the like; the result being that they are too busy with worldly things to attend to spiritual concerns. They deal with the law rather than with the Gospel; they find it impossible to know their parishes or clergy individually. It is a delusion to believe that our Church is episcopal. In the parish with which the writer is connected, apparently there has been no visit from a bishop since the days of Odo; it is little to be wondered at that our people are sceptical about their very existence!

If, in the face of the present necessity, an increase of the Episcopate be suggested, it should be laid to heart that we need an Order between the business prelate and the parish priest, who should occasionally visit our rural deaneries and parishes to confer, not only about the repair of the weathercock or the churchyard fence, but upon subjects of the highest import, the health and progress of the Living Church. Such a one, perhaps, without disadvantage, might be a *bishop*, but certainly not a *prelate*. If the supreme bishop were to pay a visit it would be a "function"—the noticeable thing about it being that he

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wore a mitre, that his train was held up by boys, that his pastoral staff was carried by a chaplain, and so on.

At present, as a rule, spiritualities are but rarely touched upon between the bishop and the individual clergymen, even at such critical times as Ordination or Institution. If you write to your diocesan or visit him, he thinks you are about to appeal for a better living.

It would appear that the chief end of administration was the regarding the Church as a huge machine, to be kept going to all outward seeming. Thus it has come to pass that the details and results of its working are considered without regard to what ought to be the output, viz., the spiritual efficiency of the members of Christ.

Oftentimes when, *e.g.*, we enter into a new sphere of duty, we long for a word of sympathy and fervour from our spiritual head, in respect of the sheep we are sent to feed and to guard; but again and again have we been disappointed, so that many have ceased to expect from our fathers-in-God what their pre-occupation never permits them to give—viz., godly counsel and comfort.

We—the clergy—need the coal from the altar to be laid on our lips; we need the visible descent of the Holy Spirit. People—multitudes of them, all indeed of the best and wisest—are looking to the Church and to the clergy, their responsible leaders; they are tired of division and discussion, disunion and debate, recrimination between Protestant and Catholic, Church and Dissent,

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of questions of millinery and incense, of this or that side or end of the Holy Table. All such questions divide, and ever will divide—such is the varying constitution of men's minds and tastes—but cannot something more excellent unite? We are sent not to debate, but to give testimony.

Oh, that we could always be ourselves—our ideal selves at our best—as when we first realized the possession of priestly grace, gift, unction, and responsibility; ourselves, instinct with prayer and promise, going forth daily like Moses with the divine glory reflected from our faces, as if, in truth, we had just come forth from the presence of God. One may well believe that if we were not afraid of letting ourselves go, if we exhibited more and more a burning zeal, a consuming love of souls, a fervent desire to realize the fact that we are spiritual persons set apart to compass a spiritual end, we should carry the whole of England with us and be permitted greater liberty in ritual, in critical interpretation, in things both great and small, so as the more effectually to advance the glory of God, and further the salvation of our fellow-men. From the nature of the case, we might not believe just the same points as our neighbours, or the same points with the same degree of enthusiasm or conviction. Still, it should ever be incumbent upon us, with divine help, to act up to our ideal. This kind of life, belief, and spirituality, is what England, what the world, what God Himself, is waiting for!

This Essay set out with the design of proving

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the need of ecclesiastical discipline, so as to induce a pure and healthy condition in the Church of Christ. As a practical man, one realizes the enormous and increasing difficulties in the way of its adoption, caused by the break with primitive tradition, by post-Reformation laxity, by the unwieldy town parish, by the complex conditions of modern life, by the imperfect relation of the Church to the State, and by the acknowledgment of baptism as, of itself, leading to membership. It is impossible to propound rules and suggestions calculated to bring about, at once and altogether, an infallible cure; but one ventures to think that the subject would repay ventilation, even if no complete and specific remedy were found applicable on the instant. The problem embraces considerations derived both from the Law and the Gospel. God and His grace would certainly be with His servants in their endeavours to purge His sanctuary and to advance His dominion.

Some readers may be surprised that an advocate of the broadest of broad views should feel the present distress so keenly, and speak so strongly as to the nature of the remedy to be applied—but one is a spiritual being as well as an intellectual.

It is true that intellectually—not altogether as a teacher, but as a student—one may profess one's self to be an absolute Freethinker, prepared to allow that the evidences and formularies of our faith should be subjected to the severest tests of every kind, literary, historical, scientific, and—last but not least—spiritual; prepared also

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to accept many of the most far-reaching results of modern Higher Criticism ; but, in the highest sense, this attitude of mind does not preclude or destroy—nay, it rather strengthens—one's faith in an Eternal God, and in a Saviour whose name is Love, and whose Life is all Perfection—to the end that all men should love Him, and in and through Him should be made perfect.

“CLERICAL ERRORS”

(*Ad Clerum*)

INTRODUCTION

AN apology is called for to account for my presumption in dealing with this subject in the midst of the brethren.

Certainly I cannot claim any moral or mental superiority. The only extenuating circumstances I can allege for my boldness are those associated:—

(a) With my experience in another profession—viz., that of Civil Engineering; which, perhaps, has given one a wider outlook than that vouchsafed to men vowed to the priesthood from their youth.

(b) With a somewhat extended travel into all parts of England, in my capacity as Deputation Secretary, successively, to two Church Societies.

(c) And with the mellowing influence of age, which constitutes a man of sixty a fool or a philosopher, even though the philosophy may be of a somewhat homely type. One does not see the use of becoming a sexagenarian unless one can scold somebody for it!

You will understand that my subject does not embrace the sins or weaknesses of the clergy, as men; *e.g.* pride, sloth, selfishness, gluttony, and

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the like. With these, as such, I have nothing to do. I have to deal solely with those errors, sins, weaknesses, peccadilloes, or whatever one may be pleased to call them, which are professional ; which tend to evolve themselves out of the atmosphere in which we find ourselves, and of the routine duties we are called upon to fulfil—with those errors which are nourished, as well as bred, in that atmosphere.

If I had cared to animadvert upon the grosser vices, a text might have been furnished by the “ black list ” in the possession of every bishop—certainly running into three figures—whereon may be found the names of men (often distinguished by learning and ability, occasionally of a high order ; and sometimes, in the past, in the possession of important cures, but) degraded to the dust by debt, drink, and debauchery. These be “ clerical errors ” indeed !

The professional defects I have alluded to—whatsoever they are—are rendered more evident to the world by the fact of our claim to be successors of the Apostles ; of our spiritual calling ; our election “ by lot ” ; our sacred and representative character ; our exalted place in the congregation ; our education, our culture ; above all, by our aim.

We make a boast of these qualifications. We cannot help but magnify our office ; we cannot away with any responsibilities by the mere utterance of the formula, “ Do not as I do, but do as I say ” ; for, whether we will or no, we are looked

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upon and expected to be as patterns and exemplars to the flock both as to what to do and where to go.

Of necessity, therefore, greater things than ordinary are naturally and continually expected of us ; and when we fail to satisfy expectation, we are often rebuked by the saying, “ I should not have expected this of *you*—a *clergyman* ”—which note of disappointment testifies to the general belief that a higher standard of conduct (as of aim and teaching) is expected of us than of ordinary lay folk—even such, *e.g.*, as lawyers and doctors.

An interesting chapter of general history could be written concerning the position occupied by the clergy in social life from the earliest times ; or even from the Reformation period. We are familiar with Macaulay’s description of affairs, in this connection, in the Introduction to his History of England ; and with scenes of clerical life depicted by Fielding and his contemporaries, and by George Eliot, Anthony Hope, and other writers of recent times.

The impression made upon our minds is a mixed one. Perhaps it is true that the difference between the best and the worst of the clergy—the learned and the unlearned—the dignified and undignified—was greater in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than at later periods. Certain it is that a change has come over affairs even during the last fifty years ; that the old type of stately, stand-off, donnish, knee-breeched and gaitered

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ecclesiastic has disappeared ; and that the cleric, in a measure, has effaced himself—put off his caste, and come down from his pedestal to enter into closer contact with the people. The railways are partly responsible for this, as they are for the reduction of caste prejudice in such a country as India.

We are brought more and more into third-class contact with our people. The old-fashioned clergy would have scorned to indulge in undue haste, but our brethren of the present day are always in a hurry—to catch a train—to sit on a committee—to manage a soup-kitchen. And perspiration is a great leveller ; it bedews the face and lessens its frigidity, it takes the starch out of the collar ; it relaxes the whole man and lowers us sadly in the estimation of our people. Indeed, we may go further and say that the difference between Conservatism and Radicalism is mainly one of perspiration. Conservatives do not perspire—they would not if they could. Who can conceive of Lady Clara Vere de Vere in a bath of perspiration ? A Radical, on the other hand, is always perspiring. He is ever, axe in hand, cutting down the Upas Trees of ascendancy, or rooting up what he considers to be deeply-set abuses.

Certain it is that, a generation ago, very great social respect was paid to the staid and dignified ecclesiastic ; and that, in this democratic age, the feeling of exclusiveness, and of the divinity that doth hedge a priest, is not so well maintained. What can we expect when even bishops bicycle,

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and employ post-cards to deny a living to one ecclesiastic, or to convey a rebuke to another for using overmuch incense in the thurible ?

In spite of all this, it does seem to me that the laity are quite prepared to take us at a high valuation if only we *do* live up to our profession ; if we *do* suffer ourselves to be guided by the Spirit invoked upon us at our ordination ; if we not only preach “ otherworldliness ” when we have nothing to gain from it, but practise it when we have everything to lose.

After all, it depends a great deal upon the individual whether the nearness of approach tends to the diminution of respect. Indeed, this very nearness of approach has many counterbalancing advantages.

It is my earnest hope that the few words one indites, with all diffidence, may serve to show the younger brethren the rocks on which some ventures split.

I.—A DANGER LYING ON THE THRESHOLD— THAT OF MISTAKING ONE’S VOCATION

Sometimes, the defect arises from the fact that the choice of a profession was fixed when the person chiefly concerned was of immature age, or guided by unworthy considerations, such as : the desire to receive a literary and university training ; the love of an easy life, coupled with a certain dignity of office ; the idea of a fancied social superiority, or of a sure competency (?) ;

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the prospect of a family living; the lack of energy to betake oneself to a commercial or professional life; and the like.

One of these causes, or several combined, may force one into a false position, from which, owing to the indelibility of Orders (?), it is all but impossible to retire; and may thus give occasion to the laity to blaspheme, and to the arch-enemy to lure one on to a life of unreality and hypocrisy.

II.—DANGERS PECULIAR TO DIFFERENT STAGES OF CLERICAL EXISTENCE

The First—or Chrysalis Stage

On admission to Holy Orders, there may be a disposition to give oneself “airs,” to assume a pertness of manner, to be puffed up, rather than sobered, on the taking to oneself the priestly office, and assuming the tremendous responsibilities of absolution and sacramental administration. At this stage, we commend the practice of Roman Catholic authorities in searching out a man’s special gift, instituting a lengthened preparation through a series of minor Orders, and only ultimately (even after admission to the priesthood) conferring a License to Preach or to hear Confessions. With what shame do not I myself look back upon the experimental efforts in my first curacy, and my feeble essayings in the midst of the congregation, or by the bed of the dying sinner!

A great deal might be said about the relation of

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the clergyman to his female parishioners, especially those who are closely associated as church helpers. Owing to their emotional nature, one's influence over them is oftentimes very marked; and where the confessional—public or private—is in use, almost unbounded. What warnings should be given under this head are sufficiently obvious—therefore, I will dismiss it with the remark that, above all, young, unmarried clergy should be careful on this ground, lest the flattery to which they are occasionally subjected should turn their heads, and lead to ill-natured remarks—whether well- or ill-founded—on the part of scandal-mongers.

Again, in the conduct of affairs in the parish, do not freshly-fledged incumbents, sometimes, invert the order of thought, and regard themselves as *popes* with an infallibility of fifty parsonic power, rather than as *ministers* to their people. We esteem ourselves to be lords over God's heritage; and, at a bound, reach that stage in which Presbyter is but Priest—writ very large!

We allow that patrons frequently make mistakes, and wantonly disturb the traditions of a parish and the balance of power, by appointing a man of opinions diametrically opposed to those entertained by the last incumbent. One is inimical, on many grounds, to the existence of such Trusts as “Simeon's”; which tend to narrow the Church, to foster (unconscious) hypocrisy, to perpetuate party strife, and to maintain a dead level of faith and practice; but, on the other hand, it may be

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said in favour of Trusts that the traditions of a parish are not wholly scorned, as they sometimes are in the case of episcopal or private patrons. One quarrels with these Trusts because they run into the opposite extreme.

How ill-advised are not some of the brethren, both High and Low, in introducing novelties, or getting rid of matters or practices offensive to themselves, often without consultation with the officials or leading members of their congregation. After all, their haste is often but the worst speed, for if they had been more patient and conciliatory, they might have secured their own way without friction, in a comparatively short time. What a sad lack of discretion, tact, consideration for one's predecessor and for the congregation at large is there not manifested by certain of the brethren! Our High-Churchman despises mattins, or, at all events, rushes through the service with lightning, unedifying speed, to make way for what he styles the “central function” of the Church, with all sorts of new and unauthorized accompaniments. Our Low Church brother tears the cross from the pulpit-fall, walks out before the choir, and must have A-men said instead of R-men.

III.—CLERICAL ERRORS IN MIDDLE LIFE

In middle life, a feeling of lassitude and sloth tends to steal over one—the fires of youth die down, and energy decays. It is hard to fight

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against the love of ease, wealth, and self-enjoyment. Some of us, at such a period, perhaps, begin to feel a growing repugnance to the visitation of old, dirty, tiresome people; and feel a distaste to foul air, and a disgust in squalid surroundings, that tended but to rouse our apostolic spirit when we were first fledged. Certain it is that there is a large number of clergymen who have, so to speak, “retired from business” in middle life. This retirement may legitimately be due to various causes—it is indeed a “clerical error” if it be due to lukewarmness, and to a diminution of spiritual fervour and love for those souls we are pledged to help and save.

IV.—CLERICAL ERRORS IN THE FINAL STAGE

The next point is a delicate one, bearing on the last stage of life, in which a man may have outlived his usefulness, and, from age and infirmity combined, may be unable adequately to discharge the duties of his high office. Where wilfulness, obstinacy, and blindness obtain, and the selfish desire to retain the emoluments of the office, we can have nothing to say but words of blame. In some cases, alas! the only refuge, on the resignation of one's Living, would be the workhouse—the income of the Living being far too small to provide either a competency in life, or a retiring pension at the end of one's service.

The Reformation, with all its benefits, had two bad defects—the suppression of monasteries

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necessitated the imposition of a Poor Law, and also shut off a haven of rest for aged and worn-out priests. Until a fitting provision be made by the Church at large, criticism must be suspended concerning the tenacity with which certain incumbents hold to their livings, to the exclusion of younger and better men.

In respect of the dignitaries of the Church, the case is somewhat different. It is only of recent years that provision has been made for the retirement of bishops, but there is now no excuse for the hanging-on of men who have outlived their usefulness. I have heard of a melancholy experience of a Vicar-General and Bishop, whose parts in a certain ceremony were so performed as to be little short of a scandal.

I am inclined to think that the lethal chamber should be brought into requisition when a man in office reaches a certain age. What that age should be, perhaps, I had better not say. I used to put it at sixty, but I have seen the necessity lately of enlarging that limit !

V.—CLERICAL ERRORS OF DIVERS KINDS

Many of the brethren are strangely unmindful of the necessity—for their own sake, the sake of the Church, the sake of the Master—of carefulness in commending their calling, their ministry, in all points—private as well as social and public, personal as well as professional, when they are off guard as well as when they are on—in their

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appearance, their gentlemanly and Christian bearing, their dress, conversation, choice of a wife, bringing up of children, government of their household, gracious hospitality, demeanour to their relatives and dependants in the home, their tact and social converse generally, their management of money matters—so as to exercise a wise generosity as distinguished from a careless and lowering indiscriminate charity—their careful keeping and rendering of parish accounts, paying bills with regularity, steering clear of debt at all hazards. In all these things there is frequently a sad lack of consistency.

Again, we should set a good example to the flock from whom *we* have a right to exact respect and obedience, by paying due respect to those who are set over us in the Lord, and by obeying their godly admonitions, save when they conflict with the unmistakable voice of our own conscience.

Further, we should adopt every method of commending the good causes we desire to further. I have known, *e.g.*, temperance taken up as a cloak for meanness, a most lamentable way of bringing about the end we desire!

VI.—CLERICAL ERRORS ARISING FROM OUR WORK BEING EXECUTED IN A SPIRIT OF MERE PROFESSIONALISM

This is a pressing danger, not confined to clerics, but affecting all engaged in church work of whatsoever degree. I have oftentimes thought that

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there is room for yet another Missionary Society—not for the benefit of bishops and clergy, *that* I must not say—but for the evangelization of organists, choirs, sextons, pew-openers, grave-diggers, *et hoc genus omne* ; yea—after all, one *must* say it—even for all, from the highest to the lowest degree, who have to do with holy things. It is melancholy to reflect upon the rapidity with which the spirit of professionalism grows, leading one to gauge work by quantity rather than by quality ; so that we pride ourselves, *e.g.*, upon the fact that we have paid ten, fifteen, or twenty visitations in the course of an afternoon, without reflecting that the part might well have been greater than the whole ; and that, in this case, haste has vitiated our work, rendering it unfruitful and maybe even pernicious.

Again, is not the same tendency observable in respect of our musical services, leading one to regard the *form* rather than the *spirit*, the *outward and audible* rather than the *inward and deep-toned*, the *meretricious and superficial* rather than the *final end* ?

VII.—PREPARATION OF SERMONS

There is a great deal in a name. A sermon is now looked for at every service. It must be preached, whether we are in tune, or out of tune ; whether we are borne aloft by the divine afflatus, or whether we are struggling in the mire. A sermon is a sermon. It must needs have so

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many heads, and an application—it must needs run to twenty minutes, whether or not we have anything to say. But what momentous issues arise in connection with this subject! In whose name do we preach? What manner of men should we be as the heralds and spokesmen of the Greatest of All? As those, indeed, whose mission it is to stand between the living and the dead? Again, who are those we are called upon to address? Why, truly, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the leàrned, the ignorant; some moved by the Spirit, others indifferent, yet all lacking something we are called upon to supply.

It may well be questioned whether any of us fully realize our responsibilities as preachers. The careless man looks upon preaching as *a thing to be done*—he is relieved when it is over—the immediate present exhausts his interest and his energy. He reflects not that in the exercise of his function, he should cast one look up to God for illumination and unction, and another at the sheep waiting to be fed. He heeds not the fact that even when the sermon is finished, the work to be done thereby is but just begun. Study and meditation alike should be called to one’s aid, and it is well that the matter be well stirred and digested in the mind before it is elaborated in any form for delivery. Needless to say, each paragraph should be bathed in prayer. A lack of definiteness and consecutiveness is frequently displayed. “He aimed at nothing and hit it,” may well be said of many a preacher. The Church’s law and

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custom give a distinct lead to the Churchman. Further, courses of sermons on specific topics are frequently useful in compelling both attention and interest. The difficulties of accommodating oneself to the circumstances of a variable and varying congregation are enormous ; but of nothing more certainly than of preaching may it be said, that “If it be worth doing, it is worth doing well.” It is not by mere reiteration—by noise or fury—that the truth can be promulgated.

Sure are we of this, that unless there be pains in the pulpit, there will be pains in the pews. Logical, clever, learned, discourses are very well in their place, but we may be so highly transcendental as to cause our eloquence to leap over the heads of our hearers, and to cause astonishment rather than edification. Many preachers are doubtful of the advisability of choosing topics connected with social life, or the events of the day ; but much will depend upon their treatment. All must be strongly in favour—at all events—of *illustrating* freely from general and local events. These need not crowd out Biblical illustrations, nor, in some form or other, the distinguishing mark of the Gospel—viz., salvation through grace.

VIII.—FEAR OF MAN

There is a time-serving element in many a man—a striving after popularity and applause. Perhaps this is not so marked in our Church as in nonconformity. If we, the clergy, are

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sometimes tempted to bewail our lot, let us look at the mass of our dissenting ministerial brethren. Their mode of election, their manner of discipline, the making of their payment, place them very much under the heel of the richest, most noisy, and cantankerous elements in their congregation. How many in secret groan and bewail their lot! Naturally, in many parishes, the parson is largely dependent upon the good-will and lavish contributions of his people; but, in their hours of disappointment, the clergy may find solace in the thought that if they were foolish enough to use their privilege to the full, they could defy their bishop and fly in the face of every member of their congregation—the parson’s freehold carrying them through scathless!

Perhaps, in respect of the dealings of the parson generally with the people, it may be admissible here to put in a plea for the saving grace of humour. A keen sense of the ridiculous has frequently stopped a man from putting himself into an invidious position, and the same faculty permitted him an extrication from a dilemma. A chairman has more than once “nonplussed” an opponent who threatened (at a vestry meeting or elsewhere) to make himself unpleasant, by quoting in a smiling way a part of one of the Odes of Horace. It embarrassed the auditor, who did not understand it, but thought that the parson was slyly poking fun at him; it diverted the other hearers and, as a rule, silenced the opposer.

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IX.—LITTLE FOXES WHICH SPOIL THE VINES

The hankering after man's applause and commendation is due to the workings of that fallen self which is so strenuous and obtrusive in our nature. It leads to many affectations, especially in one's public ministrations; the parade of learning, deepening into pedantry; the practice of mannerisms; the dropping down into sentimentalism; the vulgarizing of the Gospel, which one affects to see in the Salvation Army, and in some small section of the Church; the love of shocking people—just for the sake of showing that one is emancipated from the trammels and shackles of out-worn creeds and evaporated doctrines. All this exhibits a lack alike of charity and common sense.

In the above, and in all ways, it is well to aim at the golden mean; for, on the other hand, there is a conservatism, which is bound hand and foot; heedless of the new discoveries in science, history, archæology, and the Higher Criticism; which lifts up hands in horror at the mention of Harnack and Haeckel; and consigns such men as Darwin and Spencer to the nethermost hell, without “benefit of clergy”!

X.—LACK OF CHARITY

We all of us acknowledge the necessity of pressing on the truth and driving out error; of working for unity, and discouraging schism—but there are different ways of doing these things.

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Our way should be to present the truth in all its fulness, to act it out in the face of our people, to regard with interest, sympathy, and pity those who differ with us, and the more so, the more they differ. Because we hate dissent, that furnishes no sufficient reason—quite the contrary—why we should hate dissenters. Surely, we might suffer the vaunted superiority of our faith to exhibit itself in its fruits on our own character, life, teaching, and practice ; for God, in this way, can well take care of, and advance, His own.

There is, frequently, a sad lack of catholicity of spirit on the part of the brethren to those who are their parishioners and their cure, even though they be separated from the Church by our unhappy divisions ; which, by the way, are, in many cases, of the Church's own making or suffering.

XI.—LATITUDINARIANISM

Neither would we advocate that extreme latitude and breadth which nowadays are frequently brought about in a revulsion from bigotry and narrowness. Not that we should mistake the meaning of that word—“narrowness.” There is a limit—all must allow ; there is a narrow way, so called even by Him who willed that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

In the present day, when old beliefs are on the way to be recast and restated, it is natural

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that such subjects as Universality, the Larger Hope, the origin of the Scriptures, &c. &c., should be discussed. Those who think of the future as well as of the past and the present, cannot hide from themselves the fact that there are rocks ahead; and that a trial (such, perhaps, as the Church has never yet experienced) lies before her—compared with which questions of incense and vestments will sink into utter insignificance; a trial relating to matters affecting not only Church order, doctrine, and discipline, but the very existence of religion and morality. For this trial, our younger brethren must prepare themselves by cultivating a sober judgment and a wise counsel.

In relation to the care to be taken to avoid the lack or excess of charity, the *via media* is often commended. But it is important to notice that the exact *via media* is often not clearly indicated—it is *somewhere* in the mean between the two extremes. Again, the *via media* is not right *merely because it is the middle way*—it is right only when it can be independently established.

Neither does our criticism of the excesses of others excuse any *lukewarmness* on our own part. Now, as aforetime, a curse is pronounced against those “who come not to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Many persons are lukewarm, and of so-called Broad Church proclivities, because it is their nature so to be; they have not sufficient knowledge or enthusiasm to lead them to come down to the Valley of Decision.

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XII.—CONSERVATISM

There are men amongst us who are conservatives in the worst sense. (Every one of the brethren must of necessity possess conservative instincts, inasmuch as he has somewhat to conserve—*i.e.*, the ancient faith in its ancient expression, dressed in archaic language and diction.) Such men are unable to read the signs of the times, and to witness to the reality, order, and development of the divine evolution. In many cases there is a plentiful lack of inquiry, or indeed of interest, in the matter. It is amusing to observe that their facility and certainty of judgment on disputed points are usually in inverse ratio to their study and comprehension of them. Where scientific or critical subjects are concerned, they are prepared to pronounce a verdict without any apprehension either of science or criticism; and they proceed gaily to confute Darwin without having read a line of his works! Yet, as a working hypothesis, the doctrine of evolution is accepted by all biologists; and for many a year to come Development will be expressed in terms of the school of Darwin. Surely God has a lesson for us in all this.

XIII.—PARTY SPIRIT

Is it not melancholy to reflect on the lengths to which party spirit is carried even within the Church?—nay, is not this an alarming sign of

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present weakness as well as of future danger? Above all others, a clergyman should be outside the strife of political or religious parties, and independent of their chains. He is required to minister to all men, to teach all (whatsoever may be their conception of civil or political duty), to endeavour to lead them to form right views, and to express them with becoming prudence, modesty, and consideration. So long as the world lasts, and human nature is what it is, there will be both Radicals and Conservatives. Our concern should not be with the Radical or Conservative in the realm of politics, but with the MAN ; to teach him, if he be a Radical, to be a good Radical—and so with the Conservative.

As we have said, the clergy must have a conservative bias, they should therefore be the more inclined to be generous to men who entertain opposite views. From this standpoint, it is not at all a bad thing that occasionally we should have a Radical bishop or dean—even though they appear to scandalize the weaker brethren.

But what shall we say of the parties within the Church—of the scorn expressed by A for B, who supports Evening Communion ; or by B for A, who wears a surplice an inch shorter than ordinary ? Or what shall we think of the charity of those who conduct so-called religious newspapers ? One has known cases in which A intrudes into the parish of B—a brother priest—to denounce him at a public meeting for so-called High Church proclivities ; and in which B retaliates

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at large by visiting certain seaside towns in his vacation and pouring scorn upon C and D in the columns of the *Church Times*, because they do not provide a daily Eucharist, or because they fail to satisfy one or other of the six or six hundred points he himself considers essential to Catholic usage! This is not only contrary to Christian courtesy, but—a more serious matter still to some minds—a breach of gentlemanly feeling; and why a clergyman—though very High or very Low—should cease to be a gentleman, one cannot, for one’s life, understand.

The existence of parties within the Church is all but an unmixed evil; inasmuch as these same parties spend most of their time in condemning one another and not in provoking to good works. One hesitates not to affirm that the only excuse for the English Church Union is the existence of the Church Association. Most of us will be inclined to say with Mercutio: “A plague on both your houses!” The differences between the various sections of the English Church are so pronounced that some churches and services are not far removed from bald nonconformity, while others are a pale reflection of a Roman Mass-house. These differences are even carried out in reference to missionary effort. There must, forsooth, be a High Church Society and a Low Church Society; whilst, strange to say (but naturally because of this schism within the body), the Church—as a Church—takes no official part whatsoever in sending the Gospel to the heathen! So again, at

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Church congresses, the elements of strife are carefully fanned. The several parties have their agents, their organization, their prayer-meetings, their breakfasts, their fuglemen. Arrangements are made for applauding the respective champions, and for confounding adversaries. On such occasions, the bitterness of language employed in familiar intercourse, in reference to opponents, almost surpasses belief.

As if these things were not bad enough in adult life, schools for boys and girls are founded wherein Evangelical or Catholic tenets shall be professed ; so that the virus of suspicion and hatred is introduced not very long after the period of vaccination. When shall we come to learn that, if Mother Church be what she claims to be, she is quite Low enough, High enough, Narrow enough, Broad enough to take in and include all who bear allegiance to the Master's name, in the words in which she teaches us to lisp our belief even from the beginning?

XIV.—CONCLUSION

A few words by way of conclusion. The rush of life is increasing in intensity—the twentieth-century current runs with a double tide. The more need, occasionally, to pause and inquire of our own heart and conscience—so as to test our principles—our springs of action—the character of our work in relation to our own inner life, to our people, above all, to the Master we have sworn

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to serve. Year by year, we should demand, with deepening seriousness, whether our added years and experience lead to greater spirituality and otherworldliness ; or only to a careless facility, to which constant familiarity with holy things, and a constant repetition of holy acts, readily lend themselves.

Communion with other men's minds and words will stimulate and help us, no doubt. Quiet days, too, have their use. Perhaps the best influence would be a quiet day *by ourselves* alone—and *One* other—on every anniversary of our ordination. The practice is commendable whereby, in many clerical societies, the Ordinal is solemnly read through once a year.

In the midst of men, we learn about men and worldly interests ; we acquire a wide knowledge of human life. But the *desert* is the University of God—it is *there*, in silence and solitude, that He trains men for His service ; it is *there* that His voice is heard without interference, or the jarring and jangling of man's work, dispute, and play. Admitted that the world gives width and polish—yet the true desert life alone leads alike to depth, solidity, and endurance, even unto the dawning of that day when the world and all thereto appertaining shall have passed away leaving not a wrack behind !

CONCERNING TEXTS

AMIDST all the changes and chances of time, there are still left to us the Preacher, the Text, and the Sermon.

Education is compulsory; of the making of books there is no end—the penny-dreadful, the sixpenny magazine, the theological treatise are always with us—sermons by the score can be read by the fireside—bishops' officers are no longer bidden to hale people to church—yet, still, the people come; and, if they would but confess it, not so much for the prayers as for the sermon.

Even so, perhaps, not with the same intent and feeling as of yore, *i.e.*, to hear the Scriptures expounded in deference to the inability of the laity to read—to be taught the interpretation placed upon these oracles by Mother Church—to be allured by stories of harps and angels, or to be affrighted by the smell of brimstone; but—as ever, in all these things—from good, or indifferent, or mixed motives; *e.g.*, because it is traditional, and has been their practice from childhood; because it is considered the right thing, especially when followed by a prayer-book parade; because it utilizes spare time on the Sabbath, which otherwise would hang heavy on one's hands; because it affords the opportunity of casting a new bonnet

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in the teeth of a rival; or, lastly, because it enables one, by chance, to hear a good thing in a good way, or to display one's freedom and superiority to prejudice in criticizing the voice, manner, and style of the Rev. Dr. Spintext, as well as the matter and delivery of his discourse.

Perchance this is the proper place in which to express the opinion that we have too many sermons; that they are expected too much as a matter of course; that familiarity has bred indifference; that they have come to be regarded as a titillating soporific, or, on the other hand, as a mental exercise; in a word, that parsons and people alike are rendered sermon-proof; that the former have ceased to look for, or expect, any efficient result in the direction of general or specific conversion, and that we all should be greatly surprised if anything of the kind ensued. It might tend to break the chain of evil habit if a notice were given, ever and anon—"There will be no sermon to-day." Fortunately, in respect of the Lessons, there would still be left to the laity two sermons, one by a Prophet, another by an Apostle.

Amongst dissenting communities, the sermon takes a commanding position. The chapel is a preaching shop; the pulpit holds the field—I mean, the floor. In respect of sacred furniture, it is an easy first, everything else being nowhere. Whatever else he lacks, the minister must have preaching gifts—even his prayer taking the form of a sermon, to the intent that the Almighty may

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be duly admonished and informed. The best of these ministers are, technically, better trained for their work in this respect than are we of the Church—many of whom are not trained at all; they read more, think more, pay greater heed to the attracting and riveting the attention of their hearers.

If such a man succeed, he is the idol of his congregation, a grand asset to his denomination and political party; for many dissenters attend chapel to worship the politician and the minister, rather than to worship God.

We have styled the chapel a “preaching shop.” A proof of this statement is found in the fact that one never hears a cry for “free and open *chapels* for private prayer,” as one hears it in respect of our *churches*.

Happily, the Church of England puts preaching in its proper place—as a means of grace—as *one* element in public worship—but as subordinate to the main essential, viz., the public adoration of the Great Supreme.

In spite of all that has been said, so important is the task of declaring the will of God and of the Church, of awakening the careless, of reclaiming the backslider, of exhorting and confirming the believer; that advantage should not be taken of the fact that the sermon is a secondary element in public worship to slur over the task of its inception, or to put a premium on dullness and indolence in its delivery. Rather should our divines pay the greater attention to the sermon and all that

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it involves—the choice of subject, the preparation, the preachment, the *point d'appui* it furnishes for the private and individual following up of the teaching conveyed.

As a rule, the clergy do not take the highest rank as orators. Our detractors say that, as a body, we are the worst preachers of any Church in Christendom. If that censure be true, there must be causes for this, as for any other effect—some avoidable, others inevitable. These causes are not to be sought in moral or intellectual weakness, or, wholly, in defects of public school, or university, training—although the latter are obvious enough ; but they arise from the accidents of the position we are called upon to fill.

Our time is much occupied in secular work, in serving tables, in grappling with the vexed question of Dilapidations, and the like. Busy men cannot, lazy men will not, give the matter of pulpit preparation the attention it deserves. To a few men of low moral principle, the knowledge that they are freeholders, and can bid defiance to a complaining bishop and an outraged congregation carries them safely through. In a disestablished church, by reason of the ineffectiveness of their preaching, censorious people assert that a large number of the brethren would be unable to earn their salt.

Further, a change has been wrought in relation to the sources whence the clergy are drawn. Moreover, the opening out of new avenues of occupation, such as the Civil Service, Colonial

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appointments, and even of industries founded on new sciences (such as electricity) has drafted off large numbers of active, intellectually-gifted, men, who would otherwise have taken Holy Orders. Again, the Mission Field makes greater calls than formerly for clerics and medicos. Lastly, the stipends of the clergy are based on a low average, tithe is ever decreasing; new rates, and larger, are being added. Curates over forty years of age find it a hard matter to live and work. There is no prospect save the workhouse for many "resigned" incumbents. All these causes tend to lower the average intellectual ability of candidates for the ministry. Finally, even if a stipend were provided as large as the income of a Chicago pork-packer, St. John Chrysostoms do not grow on every bush.

Can anything be done to better this state of things, and to elevate the standard of preaching? Let us see. The present Essay touches but a fringe of the subject, and makes no pretence to settle the question in all its ramifications.

The early Jewish preachers had the Law to guide them, with all its accumulated store of precedents, commentaries, glosses, and so forth. Everything was based upon tradition. The pregnant question always came to be: "What saith the Torah or the Targum? What hath been delivered on the point by Hillel or Gamaliel, or the Rabbis of old?"

The teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees

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ultimately reached the lowest depth of profundity of learned ignorance, of dullness, pettiness, and cast-iron precedent. They got rid of their brains to make room for their learning. They were like a black man in a dark cellar looking for a sable cat which wasn't there. They diligently ran to earth the least of the commandments. Their tithing of the mint, anise, and cummin of thought and action was raised to a fine art; in comparison, even the Scotch preachers of the Covenant with their "101st and lastly" were purveyors of light literature.

Of the Great Master and Preacher one knows what may be said. In the loftiest and holiest sense, He found opportunities on every hand, sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything. His pulpit was the ground on which He trod, His texts—Humanity and God. In Him, too—and in Him, alone—precept and practice constituted one harmonious whole. What a declension to many of the Apostolic Succession amongst ourselves! A story is told of a churchwarden who differentiated two successive vicars by saying: "I wish Mr. A. would never leave the pulpit, and that Mr. B. would never enter it."

The Apostolic and sub-Apostolic sermons were wrought out of the necessities of the case, between the hammer and the anvil of a hard experience; sometimes even amidst the resounding roar of the wild beasts of the arena. They were of the subject rather than of the text; and were devoted to

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proving, from various sources, basic truths pertaining to Jesus and the Resurrection.

Naturally, it was later, at a period when the New Testament Canon had been constituted, and public worship had become assured and deliberate, that the custom of taking special texts began to be regularized. There were, indeed, great preachers in those early days.

This custom has persisted even to the twentieth century, and still remains unshaken. Everything has changed, elsewhere, during the long interval, but not this. Yet, it is permissible to reconsider our position—or, at all events, to introduce greater variety into our practice, and to ask the questions: "Should this custom of text-taking be suppressed or changed?"—"Could there be suggested a better introduction to a discourse intended to deal with present-day problems, needs, and experience?"

One may boldly leave unsaid the good things in favour of a Biblical text—with such we must all be familiar—and, as boldly, point out the defects of the practice; allowing, at the same time, that it is possible for a careful preacher to convince his congregation that an appropriate place can be found for modern subjects in the religious life and practice of to-day, by pointing out that the principles which underlie their exposition are to be found in the christian's text-book—the Bible.

I. It has a narrowing, confining, hampering influence. It tempts a preacher to inconsecutiveness.

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Occasionally, without any reference to the context, he picks texts at random, or to illustrate special truths, in such wise as to give rise to discourses unrelated to each other, or to any general, consecutive, system of instruction. Mayhap, he has no serious intention of elucidating the meaning of the text, but of using it only as a motto—a peg on which to hang a string of trite moralities. It may be, even, that the sermon is composed first, and the text chosen subsequently—merely in deference to what is thought to be the popular prejudice, that every discourse should be expository, and therefore founded upon a verse of Scripture.

II. If the exposition of certain texts be literally pursued, such a course may land the preacher in contradiction ; for, owing to the mental attitude of Easterns, certain statements directly antithetic may be found, side by side, in the same book. (Prov. xxvi. 4, 5 ; Matt. xii. 30 ; Mark ix. 40.)

III. The dangers referred to are made more apparent by the spread of modern ideas relating to the genesis, elaboration, and purpose of the Sacred Scriptures ; whereby we learn that they constitute a revelation which is progressive ; that their statement of scientific, and even of historic, truth, may be considered as expressing opinions current at the day and in the land in which the words were originally written, but as needing to be interpreted in accordance with the clarified scientific and philosophic views revealed to men and the Church in later times ; that even the Biblical

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exposition of moral truths and the presentation of the Divine Being are progressive ; so that, in this latter case, the anthropomorphic element can be no longer literally interpreted.

IV. There are isolated texts that represent God as taking counsel even with Satan ; as changing His mind ; as given to favouritism ; as deliberately leading men to hardness of heart, or to the commission of an act ultimately stigmatized as a crime, and independently ascribed to a suggestion of Satan (2 Sam. xxiv. 1 ; 1 Chron. xxi. 1) ; as promulgating laws tending to take offenders unawares (Num. xv. 35), to injustice, to cruelty ; as commanding a king of His choice to exterminate an entire people ; or His prophet to hew in pieces a prisoner of war who had been granted a *parole* of honour. From all this, it is clear that every verse of Scripture has not the same value ; but that such declarations as have been adduced must be applied to a touchstone, and corrected by the clearer revelation of God through the medium of Jesus Christ.

V. Certain questionable acts of the servants of Jehovah are regarded with silence, or related even with approval.

VI. Further, even in that part of the Sacred Volume notably dealing with personal religion—viz., the Book of Psalms—there are various deliverances of an imprecatory character, which are foreign to the letter and spirit of the religion Christ afterwards taught ; so that although we recite these passages month by month, it is but

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with a mental reservation, or sometimes (more strongly still) with a silent and earnest disavowal. It would be absurd to take a text from these sources, or, indeed, from any other, merely to express our disagreement with its purport.

VII. Again, in these days, there are certain subjects which cannot be treated on the textual lines of the Scriptures—scientific, philosophic, humanitarian, or even social, views forbidding; such as, *e.g.*, Slavery; War; Plurality of Wives; the modern Sunday; Demoniactal Possession, and the theory of Demons generally; the end of the World; the subjection of Women; discussions as to the relative seemliness of long or short hair; the Fall of Man; Original Sin; and the like.

VIII. Further, there are problems which have cropped up in later days, transcending Biblical experience; although it may be allowed that many of the principles enunciated in the Gospel do not depend for their efficacy on time or place or person, and by the principle of accommodation may be made to apply to present-day cases—though not always directly.

The objections having been duly set forth, the following question may now be dealt with: "What is suggested by way of alteration or substitution?"

After all our efforts in and out of the pulpit, we have to face the fact that the middle and upper classes are shockingly lacking in their knowledge of the Bible, of the Prayer Book, of Church history, and of the principles underlying political

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and civil life. One has more than a suspicion that this ignorance is as marked as amongst the labouring population—nay, some would assert it to be even more strongly accentuated, though with far less reason and excuse. With reference to the artizan classes, the position has been rendered full of peril by reason of the large measure of political power now wielded by them. It results that the well-being—nay, the very existence—of the Empire and the Church are entrusted to the keeping of individuals almost absolutely ignorant of the origin, history, development, and function both of the Church and State. It must be regretfully allowed that the fault is not directly chargeable upon them. The Home—the School—may be partly to blame, but, undoubtedly, the Church must bear her share of the disgrace, for it is her high and holy mission and claim to soar above all other influences and agencies—like the apocalyptic Angel in the Sun—in order to inform, to influence, and to inflame, each and all, of every age and degree, by the introduction of saving elements of teaching and guidance.

The compilers of our Directory and Service Book have laid down a line of teaching in relation to the Christian year, which is admirable in itself, though apt to become monotonous, if rigidly adhered to, Sunday by Sunday, year by year. As a matter of fact, it is rarely closely pursued, save in respect of the great festivals, when the atmosphere and surroundings forbid reference to any other than the subject of the day.

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Topics

It is possible to amend existing deficiencies by giving well-considered, thought-out, courses at appropriate times, and at suitable intervals, on the Books of the Bible—one by one—in chronological order, by way of abstract and general survey ; to proceed by drawing attention to the emendations furnished by the Revised Version ; by introducing order out of chaos into Books—such as the Prophets and the Song of Solomon—where the ordinary reader wants a skilful and scholarly guide ; by dealing, *pari passu*, with the Historical and Prophetical writings, in chronological order ; by treating of the events of the Dispersion, Captivity, Return, of the further Colonial Dispersion and Expansion, *e.g.*, in Egypt and Magna Græcia, and of the countries and peoples respectively involved ; by bringing into prominence the events of the Maccabæan and early Herodian period ; by introducing selected Books of the Apocrypha into our *répertoire* of subjects ; by tracing out the foundations of common knowledge, belief, and practice in relation to the comparative study of religions ; by dealing with early Christian Missions, and the gradual introduction of Christianity into the various provinces of the mighty Roman Empire ; by drawing illustrative matter from the history and biography of the Church of the first few centuries, and, indeed, of the Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors of every age ; by bringing forward the wonders of astronomy, geology, botany, and physiology in regard to fact and illustration—thus leading straight from Nature to Nature's God. In

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respect of many of these scientific, historical, biographical, and exegetical subjects there is involved a rich mine of wealth—at present but feebly apprehended and imperfectly worked.

In relation to all this, much may be done by saturating one's self with the spirit of the olden time as exhibited in Eastern lands, so as to be enabled to interpret statements made in the Sacred Books in their original sense and application, rather than in our prosaic, literal, Western fashion ; by finding out what the declarations, figures, images, ritual, and types really do mean, rather than what we think they ought to mean, or what we think others thought the writers thought they meant. How frequently have we not been tempted to repeat :—

“ The commentators each dark passage shun,
And hold their farthing rushlight to the sun ! ”

Thus we advocate the *subject* rather than the *text*—the *whole* rather than the *part*.

Over and above the matters adverted to above, the following are suggested which might be illuminated, transfigured, and spiritualized by adequate treatment and illustration :—

Consecutive explanation of the doctrines and Articles of the Church ; and of the Creeds and Sacraments.

Elaboration of interesting, correct, and hearty services in church. Congregational responses and singing.

Temperance, Chastity, Care of the Fallen.

Sunday Observance. Ethics of Recreation generally.

The Home, Marriage, Divorce, Parenthood.

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- Religion in the Home, Care of the Young, Inculcation of obedience, reverence, &c.
- Religious Education as appropriated between the Church, the Home, and the School.
- Dress—style, amount of income allocated.
- Systematic—as opposed to indiscriminate—Charity.
- Sanitation. Care of the Body.
- Housing of the Poor.
- Conditions of Domestic Service.
- Civics, Politics. How to restrain bitterness and unfairness, and to temper discussion with religious influence.
- Public modes of Punishment. Care of first offenders.
- Prison-gate Missions and “after-care” of Criminals.
- Care of the Destitute by law and by private effort.
- Care of the Diseased in body, and the mentally afflicted.
- Care of State-children.
- Tramps and Gipsies.
- Ethics of business. Fair Wages.
- Insurance.
- Betting, Gambling, Hunting, Racing, and Sports generally.
- Duties to the lower animals.
- Relations between Employer and Employed. Problems of Capital and Labour.
- Socialism, Collectivism, Individualism.
- Breaking down of unsuitable or obsolete class-barriers.
- Foreign Policy.
- War. How to advance Brotherhood and Universal Peace.
- The Church *versus* Romanism and Dissent. Home Reunion. Foreign Missions. Missions to the Eastern Churches, to Jews and Mohammedans.
- Church Reform—diocesan, parochial, and liturgical.
- Faith Healing, Christian Science, Telepathy, and the influences generally of the mind over the body.
- Any important passing event.

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But an objector would say: "We know *little* of all these subjects—*nothing* of many of them; the preparation would be long and tedious, involving much reading, reflection, and debate?"

Just so. This really furnishes a justification for our contention. We readily admit that a sermon on some well-worn scriptural subject, or on a specific hortatory text, could be composed with suspicious and fatal facility; mind and tongue following in the well-worn rut of ordinary thought and progression—so that practically some men have but *one* sermon—*one* theme—which is repeated, time after time, with unimportant variations. But there must be pains in the pulpit to obviate any possible pains in the pews. In an old prayer, the Almighty is besought to raise up in His Church "a body of *painful* preachers." In a sense not originally intended, the prayer has been abundantly answered. If for "painful" we substitute "painstaking," the petition might be made strikingly applicable to our own day. The great want of the Age is prophets, seers, teachers. As a matter of fact, whether in respect of teachers, poets, statesmen, or in any other capacity—the breed of blood and brains appears to be dying out. Is this a prelude to a worse state of things? God forbid. Many preachers make use of "Helps" and "Skeleton" sermons, the statements of which sound strange to the hearers because they have not been assimilated by the preachers, so as to be re-made and brought forth touched and moulded by a common sympathy

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and experience. In the hands of such men, the Sword of the Spirit has shrunk into an oyster knife—the text is the best part of the sermon. It is not so much that they have a command of language as that language has a command of them ; they are diffuse because they cannot spend time to save time ; they are transcendental because they have no knowledge of what is passing under their nose ; they deal exclusively with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they are afraid of becoming unpopular by rebuking Tom, Dick, and Harry ; they never let themselves go, because they are hitched to a short chain of custom and expediency. Hence, the World has converted the Church, not the Church the World.

Could not a supreme effort be made (say, once a month) to provide a solid, well thought-out, reasoned discourse on some vital subject which would come home to men's business and bosoms ? If this were systematically done, the great problem of attendance at public worship would be solved—all our churches would require to be enlarged !

We ask, would it not be possible, periodically, for half-a-dozen clergy to meet in the study of one of the brethren, and by mutual contribution and endeavour, elaborate a sermon such as this, which each of them would preach in his own church at the next opportunity ? What help and guidance are not invariably received in dealing with a problem which has formed the subject of discussion, when light has been thus shed upon it—rays from the many-faceted prism representing

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a varied and multiplied mental illumination? It furnishes the best illustration of the proverb—"Many men, many minds."

Some critics may object that the course advocated in this essay—viz., that of free inquiry, the giving up of a mere text, the choosing social and political subjects rather than theological, would not be respectful to the Holy Scriptures, and would not accord with their notions of preaching the Gospel, and of separating the sacred from the secular.

One may respect these objections, but, at the same time, have nothing to say to them; the objectors may be sincere, but the modern conception of the duty of the preacher, and of the range of his activities, is fundamentally different. To the true apostle, all things are sacred that may be so treated as to make for health and righteousness. He would fain lift up *all* earthly things to a heavenly plane.

In respect of one part of the criticism, it is true that free inquiry may seem, at first sight, to weaken the authority of the Bible. Certainly, modern thought suggests a fresh basis for many of the phenomena of life, natural and spiritual—a fresh centre, heliocentric rather than geocentric—hence, it is inevitable that a certain unsettlement and disturbance should arise, as one changes over from one side to the other; but these things will right themselves in time, and the Truth can always be trusted to take care of its own.

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There is no need to give up the exposition of Scripture. The true expository sermon is very instructive and valuable; the order tending to fix the teaching in the mind, and enabling the hearer to recall it even after the lapse of many years. One's contention is to the effect that it is disrespectful to take a text to which the appended discourse has but little relevance. Far better would it be, that we boldly announce: "My subject to-day is 'The relation of the housing of the people to decency and comfort,' or 'The disaster at San Francisco or Messina.'" Further, our contention furnishes a plea for greater liberty of choice than is commonly assumed.

There is no necessity that such subjects as are set forth above should entirely supplant those exclusively based on the Bible. Rather, let them be used at a suitable time and place by a suitable person, or even introduced for a brief space into an ordinary discourse, by way of illustration, or for the purpose of fixing some general lesson. The mastery of sciences and of subjects outside Scripture will attract the hearer and give him confidence in the speaker. Doubtless, many of the topics suggested appear to be highly controversial; but the minister of religion has the opportunity of dealing with such topics, not as a vulgar partisan, but as one speaking by command of a Higher Power, and addressing himself temperately to the pros and cons of any particular problem.

A great deal will depend upon the judicial and

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judicious choice of a good subject by a good speaker. Such a one would gauge all the elements of the position, and if he felt that an audience of working men could be suitably addressed on a matter of lofty spiritual interest, he would not put them off (let us say) with a dissertation on "Drainage."

Our teaching is frequently uninteresting, unintelligible, and ineffective, inasmuch as we do not sufficiently take account of present-day problems and present-day life—but deliver a stereotyped message in such an unnatural voice and manner as to arrest, rather than awaken, thought. The actor has the advantage, inasmuch as he devotes his whole energy to treat the unreal as if it were real—we fail because we invest the real (and what tremendous realities are not included in this word!) with every semblance of unreality. We aim at nothing, and succeed in hitting it!

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IT is difficult to conceive of a more delicate or intimate relation than that subsisting between a pastor and his people, consisting (as it does) of so many elements, and presenting so many analogies.

Of the latter, there occurs to one's mind, at once, the parental, the medical, and the legal. But, in some respects, the pastoral office excels all these. Inasmuch as the heaven is higher than the earth, the spiritual father has powers and attributes which (apart from those of natural affection) elevate his sanctions to the highest possible plane. Again, the physician is called in to prescribe only when one is sick ; the legal adviser only when there is some difficulty ahead, or some crisis imminent in our worldly affairs ; but the spiritual adviser is with his people from the cradle to the grave. As the representative of Mother Church, he takes the infant in his arms at the font, and constitutes it a member of the visible communion of Christ ; he is at the side of the youth in school and class ; he teaches the young to respond to their confirmation vows ; he pronounces the nuptial blessing at the foundation of a new home ; at every epoch of the earthly course, whether of sorrow or of joy, he is a

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necessary and welcome guest ; he declares the word of truth, day by day, Sunday by Sunday ; he hands to the reverent worshipper the precious elements of the broken body and the blood poured out ; he stands by the bedside of the sufferer who lies racked with pain, the eyes closing to all earthly sights ; he then points to fairer worlds, and is again summoned when the last long-drawn sigh testifies that all is over. At the last scene of all, he precedes the sheeted form, when (wrapped in the fine linen of the Church's service) it is consigned to its final resting-place, until the trump of the resurrection startles even the dead into renewed life.

Such is the ministerial course ; and when one reflects upon its variety, importance, and intimate relation, it is amazing that such a work should be laid upon mortal shoulders, and that a mere man should be called upon to undertake such responsibilities on behalf of his fellow-men.

Considering, we repeat, the demand made upon the tact, diligence, and knowledge of affairs, of the minister of Christ—the capacity needed for the due discharge of his functions, in public and in private—one is surprised that men of our mould are to be found of sufficient courage—shall we say temerity ?—to undertake the task.

Herein, the young are bolder than their seniors, who, speaking for themselves, could undoubtedly truly aver that the considerations adduced above, are more evident to their mind after they have grown grey in the service of the Church of Christ,

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than when the commission was first delivered into their hands. It is, however, to be noted that the preparation for the ministry is long and laborious, and that if the tests are thoroughly applied, an efficient guarantee is furnished of a considerable amount of knowledge and even of spiritual aptitude. May this state of things long continue, in spite of the distractions within the Church ; in spite also of the inadequate provision made (according to twentieth-century standards) for the sustentation of the acting clergy, the superannuation of the infirm, and the compulsory retirement of the unfit.

Surprising as it may appear, we are left in no manner of doubt that God hath ordained the apostolate and the apostolic succession to be *of* man and *by* man. It is conceivable that He might have adopted another method, and entrusted the proclamation of His evangel to the voice of angels. This plan would have possessed certain advantages, but it would also have had, at least, one striking disadvantage. So far as we know, angels have a different constitution from our own, a separate creation and destiny, and—it may be assumed—have enjoyed a sinless life. Their conception, therefore, of sin and of salvation must be essentially different from that which we have formed. Thus, there would have been a measure of unreality in their declarations to mankind, inasmuch as they could have drawn no lessons from their personal experience. Therefore, God hath ordained in respect of His ministers

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on earth that a *man* should speak to *men*—one *sinner* to his fellow *sinner*s—inasmuch as we (who speak to you of sin) have felt the stirrings of sin in our own nature, the effort required to oppose, the sickening uncertainty of fear, the craven yielding to temptation; or, on the other hand, the joy of finding a long, painful, resistance crowned with victory complete. From the other point of view, we have felt, too, the blessings of forgiveness, and have tasted (by frequent and happy experience) the graciousness of the Lord. Thus, have we entered into peace and joy, finding ourselves victorious through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us; realizing, moreover, that (though weak and helpless, ignorant, and foolish, of ourselves) we may yet, by Divine grace, be complete in Him. Out of the fullness of the heart, thus—and thus alone—can the mouth speak.

One magnifies one's office, to this extent, for, as a body, we are subjected to severe criticism; and, indeed, rightly so, for—as has been said—we assume a lofty position and undertake a heavy responsibility.

In one sense, we should welcome criticism—for we are apt to be overmuch pleased with ourselves and our doings; to consider that we are perfect; to persevere in our own obstinate way; and to think that wisdom must necessarily die with us. Therefore, it is expedient, that, sometimes, we should be made to see ourselves as others see us, and be subjected to the cold douche freely supplied

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by candid friends. But criticism may be unfair rather than kindly—censorious rather than charitable. It *is* unfair when it deals solely with personal attributes beyond one's power to change or rectify, such as the colour of one's hair; or with certain peculiarities and idiosyncrasies which—more or less unconsciously—attach themselves to every man, but are not of the essence of the man himself.

Naturally, we allow that the preparation to which we subject ourselves should be such as to bring out our powers to the full, and reduce these peculiarities—certainly, the unpleasant ones—to a minimum; we also allow that (bearing in mind the needs of the cultivated men and women in our congregations) we should aim at making ourselves apt scholars and men of the world, in the best sense; and that we should improve our natural gifts and endowments in order that the message should lose nothing in its telling at our mouth. But, one's faculties, one's time, one's opportunities, are limited. It is not possible for all men to be, at once and altogether, great scholars, powerful preachers, diligent visitors, discreet advisers, and successful organisers. Allowance, therefore, must be made for human limitations and infirmities; for the existence of a remnant of the old Adam still working in the innermost recesses of one's being; for a temper not always under control; for periods of disappointment and discouragement; for ill-health, low spirits, domestic uneasiness, insufficient means, and a

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knowledge that one's creditors are knocking at the gate, and knocking, perforce, in vain. The latter evil is present in many a town, and rural, vicarage to-day; and is accentuated by the fact that the clergy are frequently required to pay at a higher rate than others for similar accommodation, and are subjected to unmerciful censure if they come within measurable distance of the Court of Bankruptcy—the failure to pay one's debts being regarded by one's creditors as the one unpardonable sin.

We have said that the laity naturally expect a great deal; that we, certainly, do magnify our office and make great pretensions. In this respect, both consciously and unconsciously, clergy and laity agree in allowing that the issues are great, and that (so far as human discernment goes) our success means the salvation—our neglect or failure, the loss—of a soul.

Happily, there exists a far higher standard, both of preparation and execution, than was considered sufficient forty or fifty years ago. There are fewer pluralists, non-residents, sporting men—men of the “do not as I do, but as I say” class. Perhaps, some persons think that the clerical ideal is now pitched somewhat too high; and, undoubtedly, the callow cleric, fresh from the schools, puffed up by priestly assumption, presents not an agreeable picture. In this respect, however, things will right themselves in time, in accordance with our sober English feeling; and one may say, too, with the spirit of our formularies and Prayer Book.

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But when we have done our best in our worst way, or our worst in our best way, we ask the lay folk to remember that we are, after all, divinely called to be the ministers of the Redeemer's Church ; that we have the true succession ; that we have special duties and functions not shared by others ; that we are accredited representatives of the King of kings, and officers in the divine army of the Church Militant here on earth. Therefore, we appeal to them to look from *us* to *Christ* ; to regard the *message* rather than the *man* ; to remember the *text* even if they forget the *sermon* ; and to reflect that that text hath a message for them—an express and individual application to their state of mind and their manner of life.

Different people take different views as to their responsibility in this matter. There be some who regard Sunday as a holiday rather than a holy-day ; who attend church to pass away the time, to greet their acquaintance, or to display the last new frock or feather. One may recognize these as they crowd out of the sacred building, by the conversation one overhears as to the weather—as to some engagement relating to business or pleasure—or (if they deign to refer to the service at all) as to some unintelligent or spiteful criticism of the singing or the sermon. To such persons, one's words would have but little meaning.

But the question may well be asked—is this state of mind widely prevalent ? Are our service and devotion—we will not say shams—but are

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they something respecting which it is altogether indifferent whether it be done well or ill? In this last of the centuries, has the word of God become pointless and outworn? If it be so, if the world has really grown too wise, too learned, for the truths that have done service in the past; if it have for its votaries a message of love, of hope, of reverence, of spiritual life, superior to that furnished by the gospel of the Christ Who lived and died so long ago, let us not be afraid or ashamed to acknowledge the change. Only let us face the fact, let us confess it openly, and cease to make religion a mere insurance against hell-fire, to act the hypocrite, to mock the God of old time, and to confess with the mouth what we deny with the mind. Let us act as honest men—let us burn our Bibles, throw off our shackles, close our churches, and silence our pulpits; for (if this gospel story be indeed a delusion and a lie) preachers might spare their breath, and their congregations would be better away on the golf-green or the race-course. “Let us eat, drink, and take our pleasure, for to-morrow we die, and there is an end!”

On the other hand, if we do realize that Christ, and Christ alone, is appointed to be unto a lost universe the Way, the Truth, and the Life; if, in this sense, we feel within ourselves the movement of the Holy Spirit brooding with fluttering wings over the abyss of our soul, calling up the powers of being, evoking thoughts that breathe and words that burn—let us be conscious

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of the momentous importance of the subject laid open before us ; let *us*, ministers, make full proof of our ministry, and do *you*, the laity, regard our message with a serious interest. Criticize us, by all means, if you will ; but within limits reasonable and charitable ; remembering that criticism may sometimes defeat its purpose and rob its authors of any real or lasting benefit. In a classic story, we are told that, once upon a time, Jove set a captious critic to separate the wheat from the chaff ; and that, when the operation was concluded, the playful god presented the unfortunate man with the chaff for his pains.

One knew a minister of the Gospel who, for his sins, was permitted to have, at his elbow, a critic of this stamp. Nothing was ever right. His sermons were either too long or too short ; he spoke either too low or bawled to an intolerable extent ; but if—as in this instance—criticism always lays hold of the accidentals, it goes near to the losing of the essentials. In the case before us, the essential part is the delivery of a message from the Eternal Who suffers His treasure to be contained in earthen vessels, and Who deigns to speak with the voice of a man. It is quite clear that if the clergy could not feel that they were divinely called to deliver this message, they would not have the presumption to stand up at all.

What we contend for, is the recognition of an humble effort to do what can fairly be expected to be accomplished under human limitations. We do not plead for unthinking, unlimited,

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praise ; but one conceives that all of us, men and women, old and young, clergy and laity alike, would be all the better for a word of encouragement now and then. It would penetrate like a ray of sunshine into the heart and mind, and tend to cause individuals not to relax their efforts, but to put forth still better and worthier endeavours. This, then, one pleads for generally. It is wonderful how some persons, women especially, pass through the daily round of monotonous drudgery without one syllable of thanks, or even of recognition, from those for whose benefit this drudgery is wrought. Having said this much, one may possibly be allowed grace to plead also that a little discriminating praise be accorded even to the clergy.

In regard to pastor and people, mutual respect and affection are eminently desirable and even essential. But these relations, after all, must be established not upon an earthly and temporal basis, but upon a heavenly and everlasting. One can hardly enforce this truth with too much solemnity and earnestness. What should be the feeling of the clergy in respect of their ministration to their people? *E.g.*, is the sermon to be a mere essay, thrown off to display the learning and cleverness of the preacher ; a mere form of words glibly spoken, to be forgotten on both sides as soon as delivered ; or should it not rather be wrought out upon one's knees, always with travail, sometimes even with tears ; the Holy Ghost stirring within, showing us

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the world of sin and evil from which souls are to be rescued and led up to the Kingdom of God's dear Son—the whole procedure filling us with awe as we reflect that the angels are looking on with breathless interest, having a finer sense than ourselves of the issues at stake, involving (so far as human probabilities go) the gain or loss of a soul unto God?

But these obligations are mutual. If we pray for you, to further your advantage and endless profit, we are likewise led to ask for your prayers, that our labour on your behalf may not be in vain.

One trusts that, in every congregation throughout the land, faithful souls are supplicating the grace of Him (to whom no such request will ever be made in vain) that He may be pleased to own and bless the imperfect service of His ministers, and to teach even the stammering tongue to speak plainly when it discourses of a Saviour's pardoning love.

When one hears complaints about any particular clergyman, one is tempted to say to the detractors (who frequently seem the more delighted the more justification they appear to have)—“Do you pray for him?” “Do you use the cloke of charity?” “Do you utilize to the full the little you may be able to gather from his ministry?” If the laity fail to do their part in these particulars, can it be wondered at that a blessing is withheld?

Let a man so account of us then, as of ministers

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of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Let all, clergy and laity alike, endeavour to realize their respective obligations, so that the glory of God and the good of His people may advance together ; and the glorious end at last be reached, wherein and whereby pastor and people may rejoice in the eternal fulness of the heavenly joy.

THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE LAITY

THE Church is made up of two elements—clergy and laity. The derivation of the word “clergy” from the Greek word *klēros*, a “lot,” or “reserved portion,” indicates that they are chosen or selected out of the mass for the peculiar and honourable office of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments. On the other hand, the derivation of the word “laity” is not so clear. Probably, it comes from the Anglo-Saxon, and, by its meaning, connotes the distinction in literary knowledge which was originally so marked between the one class and the other. The progress of the ecclesiastical authority, in early times, gave birth to the memorable differentiation between laity and clergy, which had been unknown, in this form, to the Greeks and Romans.

In religious, or—may we say?—“ecclesiastical” matters nowadays, the clergy are very much in evidence. Within the church, the clergyman takes a leading part in the service; he alone ministers at the altar, declaims from the pulpit, and possesses special rights and privileges in respect of

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the building and its furniture. In the parish, too (as the word "parson"—*persona*—testifies), he occupies a conspicuous—a unique—position. The cure of souls is solemnly entrusted to him; he provides for the care of the young, the visitation of the sick, the partial relief of the poor. Practically, the organization of religious and philanthropic effort depends upon him. Each individual within the parish is supposed to come within the sphere of his ministrations, in a formal manner, several times within that individual's career, viz., at baptism, confirmation, marriage, sickness, and death.

These offices are so marked, exclusive, and regular, that an impression might naturally be formed that the clergy, of themselves, constituted the Church; and that the work and office of the laity were altogether subordinate; being limited to regular attendance upon the ministrations of the clergy and payment of dues and contributions.

This, however, would be a false idea—an idea decidedly derogatory to the layman, and, in the end, hurtful to the cleric, inasmuch as it would interfere with the ideal and efficiency of the Church. In the human body, hypertrophy—or excessive growth of one part of the organism—is accompanied by atrophy, or wasting away of some other part, the balance of power being disturbed and a general weakening of the frame resulting.

Therefore, it is in the real interest of the Church that attention should be bestowed upon

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the rights and corresponding duties of the laity ; especially as it may be allowed that the present state of things, in part, has been brought about by the excessive pretensions of a section of the clergy, and by the tacit abandonment on the part of a large portion of the laity of their true position and function.

One is not sure that the Reformation, and the excessive zeal of those who carried on theological discussions at that time, did not tend to lower the influence of the laity within the Church, and to relax the bonds of discipline generally. Yet it left some ancient offices untouched, such as those filled by churchwardens and sidesmen. The churchwarden is an officer whose functions are more numerous and far-reaching than many persons imagine. Again, the sidesman can exercise an important influence on the affairs of the church and parish, if not by force of recognized law, yet by virtue of persuasion and personal influence. Occasionally, these officials and their colleagues can rise to the dignity of a Church Council ; to which may be submitted any proposed changes in the order of service or any inauguration or extension of work throughout the parish. Speaking, for a moment, of the conduct of the services of the church, who can overestimate the value of the good offices of all lay officials—from the verger and the ringers up to the organist and the choir ?

Again, in respect of the laity, what a wide field for the exercise of their powers of teaching and

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discipline is not furnished by the schools—both Day and Sunday schools—by temperance work amongst children and adults—by guilds of pity, reverence, and service—by mothers' unions and boys' and girls' friendly societies—by visitation of different orders of individuals within the parish, and within institutions situated in the parish, such as workhouses, schools, asylums, almshouses, homes, barracks, and institutes of various descriptions—by provision of nurses for the sick poor, for mothers and young children—by furnishing bands of district visitors, and by the distribution of literature referring to purity, temperance, and thrift—by the organization of associations for missionary effort, both home and foreign—and in a hundred other ways!

The recapitulation of these varied schemes reminds one there are special departments that must be maintained and carried on mainly by the gentler sex—such as the care of young servants and women generally; the rescue of the fallen; the provision of nurseries and crèches, and the instruction of children—boys as well as girls—in their tender years. But the position and work of women within the Church are so important that they deserve separate treatment; one merely refers to the matter here to have the opportunity of expressing one's satisfaction at the enlarged facilities an enlightened christian conscience furnishes, whereby the peculiar gifts of women are now formally consecrated to the highest religious ends. One might, too,

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mention in this place the advantage the Church of England possesses in a married clergy, whereby so many helpers are secured in respect of the wives and daughters of our vicars and curates. Not only so, but circumstances are, in this wise, rendered more favourable for the combined action of women in conjunction with the ordinary ministrations of the clergyman in his parish.

It is well to note the immense power wielded by the laity in virtue of their contributions to Church work and endeavour. They furnish the greater part of the wealth which builds and endows our churches, founds our schools, and maintains the thousand-and-one organizations flourishing under the ægis of the National Church. It lies in their power to maintain these in full efficiency, if they consider that the clerical work is executed on fit and proper lines; or—by the withdrawal of subscriptions—to cause them to languish and die, if they think that the organizers and managers are false to their trust and to the tradition and practice of the Church. If the faithful laity, then, have the wish to maintain traditions and practices in accordance with the sober judgment of our race and nation, they have the power so to do; for there is no more tremendous material influence than that of the purse.

In the political world, moreover, the action of the lay people is all but supreme. The power of the bishops in the House of Lords is restricted by

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custom and precedent ; the ordinary clergyman is precluded by statute from sitting in the House of Commons, and the Houses of Convocation possess but little political influence or power. In this field, therefore, the laity have full scope for their energies. As a matter of fact, they appoint the bishops—the rulers of our Church ; for these chief pastors are selected by the sovereign, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister of the day ; and if the Prime Minister be not representative of the prevalent feeling and influence of the great body of the English people, one does not know who is. If then the laity want bishops—good, honest, and true—they must, by constitutional means, make known their wishes to the chief minister of State.

But the work to which attention has hitherto been called is of a material or philanthropic character. Is the work of the laity to be confined to this ? By no means. A layman is a Christian, a man saved, taught, moved, by Christ Himself. If he be a Christian indeed, he will, therefore, feel it incumbent upon him to do what he can to bring before the minds of others a knowledge of the influences which have changed his own life, and brought peace and comfort to his own soul.

The notion that all spiritual matters and ministrations must be left to the clergy, and the clergy alone ; that it is impertinent on the part of a lay person to read the Scriptures to the ignorant, to offer prayer by the bedside of the dying, to

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exhort a congregation in the words of the Gospel, is altogether monstrous and unworthy, and should be set aside at once. First, it would render the work too arduous and overwhelming for the clergy, who number but some 26,000 men, only about two-thirds of whom are in active ministerial service. What can one man, or a small band of two or three men, do, in the midst of a teeming population of some eight, ten, twelve, even sometimes twenty thousand, souls ; where, moreover, ignorance and crime perhaps are rampant ? No, the Church of England, in our day, in our large towns—in our vast metropolis, above all—should extend and perfect her organization, by laying hold on the godly laity, setting her seal on one and the other, who show spirituality, intelligence, and aptitude for the work ; furnishing facilities whereby (without giving up their calling or occupation) the elect might assume the office and work of Reader ; so that, with due preparation, and the consciousness of a true commission, they might go forth to our lodging-houses, clubs, public-houses, factories, warehouses, open spaces ; and, in due season, and, by well-approved methods, bring personal influence to bear upon the men and women who congregate in our vast centres of population dwelling there (neglected and overlooked), stagnating, festering, cursing both God and man in their despair and agony, and departing this life without any hope or expectation of a better.¹

¹ In this connection may be mentioned the ideals of the C.E.M.S. and of the Brotherhood of S. Andrew.

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By its indifference and apathy, society is preparing for itself a tremendous awakening. This is coming, slowly but surely. The present generation is but dimly conscious of it ; but in the next generation, the accumulation of work will both be more evident and ten times more difficult wherewith to cope. One vice to which one would markedly refer is designated Hooliganism. Who is to blame for this? The individuals themselves? That is our first impulse—to hold them solely responsible, to look at them with loathing and contempt, to turn away with disgust, to immure them behind the grim walls of a gaol, and endeavour to forget their existence! But this will not avail. The fact is, one should not blame these people, of themselves. They are only the product of our own folly and fault, in suffering them to herd together like the beasts of the field ; in denying them in our public elementary schools a full measure of the christian faith ; and, in certain of these schools, making no provision for christian teaching at all.

In our country parishes, each man, woman, and child is known to the pastor of the flock, a certain measure of control being thus exercisable, even if it be not, in all instances, efficacious. In our large towns, how different is the case. There are thousands and tens of thousands, who are never brought within reach of any civilizing, socializing, christianizing, influences whatsoever. They seek not the clergyman or the reader, they make not their way to the church—not they!

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In most cases, in our fashionable resorts, they would be spurned from the door as verminous, malodorous, and corrupt—as, indeed, they are. Besides, they have descended so low that our church service, our teaching and doctrine, have no meaning for them. No, we must try a different tack, make up for past neglect, begin before the beginning!

The message, then, of to-day is: the laity to the rescue! Who will come to the help of the Lord against the mighty—against all the forces of misbelief and Satan? We want men, in their numbers, to go forth, to break up, to isolate these masses, to bring them under individual control, to deal with each according to his need, his idiosyncrasy.

Lastly, we must do it *soon*, we must do it *now*, or it will be too late; seeing that this flood of bestiality, misery, and crime will tend to rise and swell and gather strength; until (like some winter's flood) it overtops our feeble barriers and sweeps resistlessly over the land, burying deep beneath its foul and turbid waters all traces of our commercial supremacy, our refinement, our civilization, and our faith!

HYMNOLOGY, AND THE CHOICE OF HYMNS FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

THE faculty of thought would have been comparatively useless without the power of expression in speech. Therefore, we are not surprised at their intimate connection physiologically, this close linking together being, moreover, a testimony to the development of the race in time.

The use of the faculty of speech makes man a social being—the highest use of it enables him to exercise his religious sensibilities, and serves to prepare him for worship near the Throne. In early ages, mankind thought in rhythm, spoke in rhythm, worshipped in rhythm; or, not so much perhaps in rhyme, as in accordance with certain primitive laws of stress, accent, metre, alliteration, and the like.

It is interesting to note that the beginnings of song, of dance, of drama, were all associated with religion.

Of the power of song, wedded to music, added to rhythmic movement, colour, light, incense, vestments, nothing need be said. It affects all

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minds, in a measure—some minds (as in the case of Latin nations in southern climes) in an intense degree.

In the present Essay, however, we separate the words from the music, and consider the former exclusively. We have to remember, however, that, in a large number of cases, it is the tune that carries us along; for, in some instances, a hymn to which a beautiful tune is wedded contains expressions which, to say the least, are pure nonsense.

DEVELOPMENT

The development of vocal and instrumental music in Asia and Africa proceeded on different lines to its course in the Western world; and, although the West is largely indebted to the Middle and Nearer East for its language, numerals, philosophy, law, and religion, its conception of melody and harmony, and its elaboration of the instruments whereby these may be expressed, are largely its own.

In respect to the literature of song, an exception may, perhaps, be made in respect of the Hebrew melodies, which have profoundly influenced the Western world, through its acceptance of Jewish and Christian theology and literature.

Hymns may be taken to include anything sung or recited by way of praise to God, whether in a metrical or simply rhythmical shape.

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A vast number of hymns, good, bad, and indifferent, are constantly being produced.

Dr. Julian's new edition of the *Dictionary of Hymnology* includes annotations in respect of 30,000 hymns; and furnishes a record of 6000 authors, translators, &c.

OUR REFORMATION CHURCH

Since the Reformation, the history of music in the public services of our Church is remarkable. The old system was done away, some time elapsing before the possibilities of the new system were discovered.

In due time, the chant, the anthem, the art of accompaniment were developed; and that, too, under the hands of masters such as Tallis, Purcell, Turle, Wesley, &c., who showed the world that the English race could produce melody of the highest order.

But the rise and progress of hymnology did not accord with those of the departments above mentioned.

Early endeavours were directed to force the Psalms of David—themselves elaborate musical compositions in form—into the Procrustean bed of measures foreign to their genius and structure.

At that time, for the sins of the Church, God raised up Sternhold and Hopkins. Thomas Sternhold—joint-author with Hopkins of the first version of the Psalms of David in English metre—was born near Blakeney in Gloucestershire, and

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educated at Oxford, after which he became Groom of the Robes to Henry VIII. and Edward VI. He died in 1549. He versified fifty-one of the Psalms, the remainder being written by Hopkins, Norton, and others.

Nahum Tate, poet—so called by courtesy—was born in Dublin in 1652, and educated in the college of his native city. On coming to London, he assisted Dryden in some of his works, and succeeded Shadwell as poet-laureate. He altered Shakespeare's play of *Lear*, and wrote several poems, but is chiefly remembered by reason of his version of the Psalms.

His coadjutor, Nicholas Brady, was a divine who studied at Oxford and Dublin, took an active part on the side of the Prince of Orange, and afterwards became chaplain to him as king. He was born at Bandon, Ireland, in 1659, and died in 1726.

MODERN TIMES

When we take into account the supremacy of the masters of English verse—whilst not forgetting many first-rate specimens of hymns—we sorrowfully admit that religion and our Church have been either neglected altogether or badly served by our national poets.

Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* show us what a master-hand could have done if it had been suffered to sweep the strings of the sacred lyre.

It may be stated that many of our most

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popular hymns are merely translations, or adaptations from Greek or Latin originals, and that some of our best-known compositions are the work of Nonconformists.

Certain metrical songs are on the border line between the secular and the sacred. Take, for instance, "Home, Sweet Home." The characteristics of a hymn are deep solemnity, pathos, appeal to the religious emotions. All these may be embodied in the melody above mentioned. But the main differentia are to be found in the fact that the true hymn appeals to the Almighty by name and reference—by way of praise, entreaty, or even prayer. That rules out "Home, Sweet Home." A family song, it may be, susceptible of rousing the social instincts, but to give it a place as a hymn in private or public use is to strike a false note.

CHOICE OF HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

What rules should determine our choice of hymns for public worship? That is our special subject, for we are not dealing with tunes, or metres, or hymns available for private devotion.

To answer this question we must ask further: "What is the object of using hymns at all?" The response is clear: "To subserve the praise and the glory of God—to add our contribution to the volume of sound arising from the worship of angels who circle around the Throne. To that end—to evoke the deepest feelings of the human

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heart, to unlock the recesses of the soul, to engage in unity of thought, feeling, and expression—all worshippers are gathered together to glorify God with one voice as well as with one heart, and to maintain the loftiest excitation of feeling—even as an army on the march is stimulated by the tabor and the drum.”

We shall gradually reach the desired conclusion by considering what should be avoided.¹

(a) One should avoid bad poetry. Examples :—

Hymn 91, v. 1.

“Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the troops of Midian
Prowl and prowl around?” . . .

—REV. J. M. NEALE.

Hymn 195, v. 2.

. . . “They cannot reach the mystery,
The length and breadth and height.” . . .

—REV. C. WESLEY.

Hymn 255, v. 6.

. . . “Just as I am, of that pure love
*The breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,*²
Here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.” . . .

—CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

¹ For the sake of convenience most of the examples are taken from one book—and that the most popular—*Hymns Ancient and Modern*; the last revision but one.

² The repetition of these unpoetical and unsingable words in so many hymns is remarkable—especially in the case of writers and true poets, like Charles Wesley and Charlotte Elliott. It results, of course, from the original prose in Eph. iii. 18.

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Hymn 270, v. 3.

. . . "Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength *endued*;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of *God*." . . .

—Rev. C. WESLEY.

Hymn 337, v. 3.

. . . "There's a home for little children
Above the bright blue *sky*,
Where Jesus reigns in glory,
A home of peace and *joy*." . . .

—A. MIDLANE.

(b) Exhibitions of bad taste should be avoided:—

Hymn 105, v. 3.

. . . "May these all our spirits sate,
And with love *inebriate*." . . .

—Rev. F. OAKELEY.

Those who demand so insistently the "original" verses of famous hymns will be surprised to find that the concluding lines of Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way" (*A. and M.*, 373) were not—

. . . "The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower." . . .

but

. . . "The bud may have a bitter taste,
But *wait to smell the flower!*" . . .

So the *editio princeps* of Dr. Watts's hymns shows that the original version of a popular favourite ran thus (*A. and M.*, 108):—

"When I survey the wondrous Cross,
Where the young Prince of Glory dy'd" . . .

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Again, a popular favourite has been elaborated out of Kirke White's original (written in 1806 on the back of a mathematical paper):—

“ Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
Onward, Christians, onward go;
Fight the fight, and worn with strife,
Steep with tears the bread of life.” . . .

(c) Obscurity :—

Hymn 91, v. 4.

. . . “ And the *end* of sorrow
Shall be *near My Throne*.” . . .

—Rev. J. M. NEALE.

Hymn 68, v. 3.

. . . “ Ah! what availed King Herod's wrath?
He could not stay your Saviour's path.
The Child *he sought alone* went free;
That Child is King eternally.” . . .

—Sir H. W. BAKER.

Hymn 277, v. 4.

. . . “ Out of my stony griefs
Beth-el I'll raise;” . . .

—Mrs. ADAMS.

Hymn 574, v. 2.

. . . “ The old man, meek and mild,
The priest of Israel, slept;
His watch the Temple child,
The little Levite *kept* ;” . . .

—J. D. BURNS.

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(d) Confusion of imagery:—

Hymn 453, v. 1.

“O *Shepherd* of the sheep,
 High Priest of things to come,
Who did'st in grace Thy servant keep,
And take him safely home.” . . .

(e) Hymns manifestly written to order—jejune, wooden, pointless, wanting alike in spontaneity and unction:—

Hymn 614, v. 6.

. . . “Praise, Lord, to Thee for Matthew's call,
At which he left his earthly all;
Thou, Lord, e'en now art calling me,—
I will leave all, and follow Thee.” . . .
—Bishop WALSHAM HOW.

(f) Only a sweet song, hysterical, over-much subjective, mawkish, sickly, sentimental, largely characteristic of Roman Church:—

Hymn 234.

“O Paradise.”

—Rev. F. W. FABER.

Hymn 197, v. 5.

. . . “Thou spread'st a Table in my sight;
Thy Unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight,
From Thy pure Chalice floweth!” . . .
—Sir H. BAKER.

This phrasing may lead to unreality—which is the high-road to hypocrisy. However, in this

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case, we must remember it is meant to be used at a Celebration.

Hymn 210, v. 1.

“Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,
Taught by Thee, we covet most
Of Thy gifts at Pentecost,
Holy, heavenly, love.” . . .

—Bishop CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH.

We can picture this as being sung at a Welsh revival—and also surmise some of the possible results!

Some critics include Newman’s “Lead, Kindly Light” in this category, but although the Divine Name is not therein employed the pronoun is; moreover, this hymn gains immensely in meaning when one realizes the circumstances under which it was written—it may be so also with others of a similar kind.

Similarly, “Praise to the Holiest” . . . will not be fully appreciated unless it is read in “The Dream of Gerontius,” *i.e.*, in its original setting.

The following hymns are susceptible of criticism under this heading:—

178, Part 3, v. 2.	222.	258.
180, v. 4.	229.	324.
192.	233.	361.
210.	240.	

(g) Unreality—too personal a note. Here a certain latitude must be allowed, and the realization of a dawning hope allowed for; but (whether in

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praise or prayer) it is injurious and hypocritical to put words into the lips of the worshippers which probably far transcend their tone of feeling.

Hymn 195, v. 1.

. . . "O Love divine, how sweet thou art!" . . .

. . . "I thirst, I faint, I die to prove" . . .

. . . "For love I sigh, for love I pine." . . .

—C. WESLEY.

Hymn 255, v. 5.

. . . "*Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone.*" . . .

—C. ELLIOTT.

Hymn 234.

. . . "All rapture through and through

In God's most Holy sight?"

—Rev. F. W. FABER.

(h) Theology too Judaic and realistic:—

Hymn 103, vv. 4, 5.

. . . "Blood to win us crowns on high."

"Jesu, may those precious *fountains*

Drink to thirsting souls afford ;

Let them be our *cup* and *healing*,

And at length our full reward." . . .

—Rev. Sir H. W. BAKER.

Hymn 104, vv. 5, 6.

. . . "Had Jesus never bled and died,

Then what could thee and all betide

But uttermost *damnation*?" . . .

. . . "And from those *everlasting flames*

For evil ones preparing." . . .

—Rev. J. M. NEALE.

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Hymn 107, vv. 2, 7.

. . . "Grace and life eternal
In that Blood I find;" . . .

. . . "Louder still and louder
Praise the precious *Blood*." . . .

—Rev. E. CASWALL.

Hymn 114, v. 5.

. . . "So may the *Blood* from out His side
Fall gently on us, drop by drop;" . . .

—Rev. F. W. FABER.

Hymn 633, v. 1.

. . . "There is a fountain filled with *blood*,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains." . . .

—W. COWPER.

Surely these anatomical details might be spared, alike in our preaching, praying, and hymn-singing. They belong altogether to a different period of thought and expression than the one in which our lot is cast.

(i) Hackneyed :—

"The Church's one foundation." . . .

.

"O Paradise, O Paradise." . . .

.

"Ten thousand times ten thousand." . . .

.

"Oh, what the joy and the glory must be." . .

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(j) Capable of misapprehension :—

. . . “Can a woman’s tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?” . . .

Children have been known to interpret the latter as “she-bear”!

(k) CHILDREN’S HYMNS

Great care should be exercised in the choice of children’s hymns, many of which are sweet, pure, and choice, whilst others are sad doggerel.

The following is an instance of a sour doctrine in an evil dress :—

. . . “There’s a wicked spirit
Watching round you still,
And he tries to tempt you
To all harm and ill.

But ye must not hear him,
Though ’tis hard for you
To resist the evil
And the good to do.” . . .

Again, our old friend Dr. Watts writes :—

. . . “Why do I love my sports so well
So constant at my play ;
And lose the thought of heaven and hell,
And then forget to pray?” . . .

We will conclude by quoting an invitation extended to its subscribers by a leading Missionary Society not far from Salisbury Square.

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The appeal runs: "Let the yearnings of our hearts take shape in well-known words." Then follows this verse:—

"Oh for a passionate Passion for souls,
Oh for a pity that yearns,
Oh for the Love that loves unto death,
Oh for the Fire that burns.
Oh for the pure prayer-Power that prevails,
That pours itself out for the Lost;
Victorious Power in the Conqueror's Name,
The Lord of Pentecost."

This illustrates almost all the faults noted in this Essay—the first and fifth lines containing alliterations that offend alike the mind, the ear, the tongue.

Singing

THE VOICE AND SONG

I COR. xiv. 15: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

GOD'S Kingdom in nature is built up of types. These types are found alike in the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal world. Man belongs to the group called the Primates. In this group, a large body of mammalian creatures is associated with him. Each individual of each species, or genus, is built up in the same way, there being a similarity of structure, of organ, and of function. Physically, man is not the largest, swiftest, or strongest, animal. His sight is inferior to that of the eagle or the lynx; his scent to that of the jackal; his hearing to that of the dog. His transcendence is moral, of course, but—physically speaking—any measure of superiority he possesses lies in his ability to cultivate the senses, and assist them by fitting means and instruments.

Apart from moral or spiritual attributes, man is distinguished from the brutes by at least three great characteristics or potentialities:—

(1) The power to create fire; (2) the power to use tools; (3) the power to utter articulate and spontaneous speech.

Animals, in a state of Nature, are incapable of

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kindling a fire ; indeed, they are full of fear and alarm at the flickering flames, regarding them as living and active enemies. Again, while all animals have their characteristic calls and cries, they yet cannot rise to vocal and connected speech.

Just as in a tame condition, or after successive generations spent in confinement, animals tolerate fire and draw towards its warmth ; so, in some cases, may they be taught by man's art to enlarge their compass of articulate utterance. This is chiefly noticeable in the case of certain birds which can be led to copy sounds, and even to utter sentences, with wonderful fidelity ; but this facility is grafted from without upon their powers ; it does not proceed, as in man, from within, as an act of independent volition bringing about the varied and original expression of feelings and emotions. It is simply imitative, being uttered again and again—parrot-like, as we say—at the word of command, or with the desire to gain some prize or coveted morsel.

The more one studies the voice in human beings, the more wonderful it seems. We have gathered that it is distinctive, that it is the instrument of the soul, the organ of a highly-strung nature—that it is the vehicle of moral and spiritual emotion, that it enables us to echo the Word of God, thus constituting itself a link with the Divine Nature.

Then, how expressive it is ! It denotes pleasure up to the heights of purest joy, degrees of pain down to the lowest depths of the groaning soul—

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it chides, threatens, warns, scolds, entreats, imprecates, deprecates, and commands. It soothes and controls, pleads and menaces, whispers and storms, signifies uncertainty and dread on the one hand—on the other, philosophical precision of thought and expression.

From how many kinds of lips, too, does it not proceed! We have the cooing of the little child, the crooning note of the fond mother, the whisper of the ardent lover, the shrill treble of the scold, the hoarse bluster of the desperado, the thunder of the orator from his rostrum, the entreaty of the divine from his pulpit, the clarion voice of the general on the battlefield, the shriek of agony of the wounded soldier, the last prayer of the drowning wretch on the resistless billow, and the faltering accents of life's veteran as he lies agonizing on the bed of death!

The tongue—what does S. James say about it? His testimony is, indeed, true. How rightly may it be used—how foully prostituted! Is it not then an important thing to use every effort to bring this organ—so powerful for good or evil—to its highest state of efficiency; and, furthermore, to guide with discretion and forethought the words it is led to utter?

The vocal apparatus, or voice box, is but a small organ and a delicate; yet—within certain limits—its range, force, and distinctness can be immensely improved.

So to speak, we have two voices, a speaking voice and a singing voice—both needing cultivation.

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For the lack of this, in the case of the speaking voice—how much is lost on the platform, in the senate, in the church. How many times have we wished to hear, and strained every effort—only to be disappointed? What various hindrances we meet—what various imperfections—the drawl, the stutter, the thick and mumbling utterance; the speech, now too fast, anon too slow; now pitched too high, anon sinking into whisper; now with nervous effort but too apparent, anon with utter carelessness and indifference as to the result!

On the other hand, how delightful, either in the domestic circle or in public life, is not the utterance free from such defects—calm, clear, well-pitched, sustained, sonorous; varied as occasion serves, and as age, sex, rank, office, and occasion require—to convince, to comfort, to affirm, to deny, to heal, to console, but always to charm and rivet the attention?

Our subject is naturally suggested by the requirements of divine service. Having spoken of the voice of the reader and preacher, it is necessary to turn to the vocal part to be sustained by the congregation. There is no doubt that some of us, in this connection, could tell strange stories of our experience as worshippers in early days; of the duet between the parson and the clerk—a functionary often frankly illiterate; of the barrel-organ; of the Hallelujah Band; of the responses carelessly gabbled by a number of untrained children.

These days have passed away, but even now

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is everything for the best? It is unnecessary to enter into disputed questions as to the proportion of music desirable in our Church service, or the respective advantages of Gregorian and Anglican chants; or the choice between singing, intoning, and reading, the responses; or the selection of anthem or service; but whatever be the mode adopted according to the wish and capacity of the vicar, choir, and congregation, pains should be taken to render that particular service in the most effective manner. The ultimate objects are:—

(1) To glorify God; (2) to lift up the spirit of man.

God cares not for the medium. He is equally well-disposed to the highly-rendered cathedral function or the poor attempt poorly performed in a back-street Bethel, so long—that is to say—as the second object is secured; viz., rousing the spirit of the worshippers, attuning to devotion and calling up the best and holiest feelings of their nature; so that, whilst praising God, they succeed in elevating their own being.

It is desirable that far greater attention be paid to the musical portion of the service, not only on the part of the organist and choir, but also on that of the worshippers; for the music should always be both chosen and rendered with an eye to the middle element in the congregation.

It may be contended with reason that every one should learn to sing—on sound and rational principles, too. It would be well alike for health and for purposes of ordinary speech. All persons

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may not have a singing voice, or be granted the good fortune to become a Sims Reeves or an Adelina Patti ; but a bad voice may be mended, and a poor voice developed, by judicious training. When each individual was thus trained—as in the sixteenth century—to such an extent as to enable him to take the part nature intended, then only could he furnish an appropriate contribution to the music selected for the day.

As it is, the anomaly is presented (whenever a chant or hymn tune is sung in church) that people with all kinds of voices sing the soprano. It results that the balance is upset, and a complexion given to the air which it was never intended to wear—for the character of a note intended for a boy is entirely changed when it is sung by a man.

Of course, what has been suggested could hardly be done without previous notification of the music intended to be used, or without preliminary congregational or home practice. This theme is worthy of consideration, and it were well if it could be brought to the notice of our people under three heads:—

1. What was done in the past.
2. What is done in the present.
3. What might be done in the future.

The time is ripe for reform, inasmuch as many advantages are ours. We have the heritage of the past in the possession of different styles of music for chanting ; we have the traditions of a sound

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English School, and the memory of gifted composers and musicians. We have a wealth of good and cheap music ready to hand; we have noble instruments. There is no lack of skill or material amongst us in respect of composers, players, or singers. In our boys we have, perhaps, as good material as any country in the world. Go to King's College Chapel, Cambridge; Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford; St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Temple Church—listen to the pure, clear, distinct winged-sounds that issue from those childish throats, and float, quivering in the air, from end to end of the groined roof; then, if you close your eyes, you can imagine you are translated to the vaults of heaven and are listening to the angelic choir of young-eyed cherubim!

What strength, clearness, tenderness, feeling, devotion, and beauty are not capable of being expressed in song—in immortal words married to immortal sounds; and again—what a range is not presented to us? Witness the nursery song, the plantation screech, the Scotch, Irish, and English, melodies. Follow these up to the gushing, gliding, swelling, crashing melodies of the high-priests of music and of God—Haydn, Mozart, Handel, and the rest of the masters.

The ancients fabled that Orpheus—playing on his lyre—could draw even rocks and trees and wild beasts to follow him. This is but a parable set forth to show the power inherent in music to soften the hearts of men, to inflame their

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imagination, to rouse them from evil, sloth, and impurity, and bring all heaven before their eyes.

Surely we underestimate the power of music in not employing it more to soothe the young, the sick, the distressed in our hospitals; to soften the hard, callous, and culpable in our gaols and penal settlements.

Whose heart would not go out to the green pastures and the still waters when he heard the strain: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd"? Who would not be moved to self-reproach by the wailing refrain: "He was despised and rejected of men"? Who would not instinctively rise and uncover at the lament of the Dead March in "Saul"—or in "Judas Maccabæus"? Who would not be roused to animation and sensibility, and thrilled in all the fibres of his being, when forth should peal the Hallelujah or the Amen Chorus?

Surely they who composed these strains were God's ministers, waiting upon this very thing; their power so far transcending the ordinary workings of man's nature in respect of conception and execution that one can but imagine a special inspiration to have been communicated to those who—out of such materials as strings and plates and pipes and reeds, and the weak, quivering chords of the human voice—have compounded the most divine and heavenly sounds ever to be heard on this side the Throne of God.

Let us then, as individuals, as Christians, as worshippers, pay what attention we can, exercise

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what influence we can, in regard to this matter ; so that we may plead with the fervour of the Apostle—(1 Cor. xiv. 15)—and influence others in the same direction, to the end that (in the Temple of God, and therefore in His immediate presence) men should sing with the spirit, with the understanding, and with all the devout fulness of heartfelt reverence.

ARE BROAD CHURCHMEN, *IPSO FACTO*, DISHONEST ?

INTRODUCTION

THE present epoch is one of inquiry, and, therefore, of unrest. This state of things has been brought about by the inexorable logic of mental life and development. It is attributable to the spread of education, of liberty of thought and action, of scientific investigation, geographical research, invention, and discovery ; the growth of the principles of equality, leading to emancipation from old-world ideas, and to the levelling up of the masses originally in a state of semi-serfdom or of conscious inferiority in estate and knowledge.

The epoch most akin to our own is that of the sixteenth century, wherein—amongst many other social changes and reforms—similar causes brought about a reformation of religion. In like manner, a change in thought and feeling is now taking place, which a future historian will be called upon to designate a New Reformation.

ADVANCE IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE

The past hundred years has witnessed the resolution of many physical puzzles, this resolution

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opening a way for the settlement of mental and moral problems also—inasmuch as body and mind are really one. A century like that into which we were born and in which we were reared cannot leave man or his institutions as it found him or them.

It is generally allowed that—in all branches of science save one, *i.e.*, Religion—absolute liberty should be accorded to the student to go to the root of the subject; to put aside preconceived ideas; to break with tradition if that tradition be false or imperfect; and to go as far and as fast as he pleased, so long as he was possessed with a love of truth.

Further, even severely orthodox theologians feel bound to accept any well-grounded facts or theories as to astronomy, geology, &c., which may be delivered to them by competent scientists; although such facts or theories may tend profoundly to modify former views of the Creator's working in time and space, and therefore of the Creator's very being and attributes themselves.

Of late (indeed within our own lifetime) the material and ethics of Natural Religion have been transformed to such an extent as to be foreign, not only to theological writers of the Reformation period, but also to the authors of the Old and New Testaments—yet the world still goes round, and the Church of Christ still stands firm!

Again, no objection is raised to lay members of the Church pursuing scientific or theological studies in the way that they like best, and in

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reaching conclusions in accordance with advanced views in science and philosophy. So long as they outwardly conform, no one takes much notice; yea, if a scientific man goes out of his way to express his belief in a Divine Being, our clerical friends are filled with mild astonishment and are thankful for the smallest mercies at his hands.

POSITION OF CLERGY

The gravamen naturally arises in respect of the clergy, who have been educated by selected men along selected lines, and admitted to Holy Orders only after subscription to certain specific declarations. These are interpreters as well as teachers—teachers as well as administrators.

Up to the year 1865, ordinands made three declarations in the following form, as required by Canon 36 of the year 1603:—

- (i) "That the King's Majesty, under God, is the only supreme governor of the realm, and of all other his highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions, or countries.
- (ii) "That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully be used, and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and none other.

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- (iii) "That he alloweth the book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy, in the convocation holden at London, in the year of our Lord God, 1562, and that he acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God."

The yoke of this subscription was found to press heavily on some shoulders, consequently in the year above mentioned—viz., 1865—the terms were modified in the following sense:—

- (i) "I, A. B., do swear that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance, to her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God."

Between the passing of 28 & 29 Vict. c. 122, and 31 & 32 Vict. c. 72, the oath to be taken was one of allegiance and supremacy contained in 21 & 22 Vict. c. 48, s. 1.

By s. 11 of 28 & 29 Vict. c. 122, no Oath is to be taken in the Ordination Service. In 1866, the Convocation of Canterbury passed a new canon in conformity with this Act, repealing the former Canon 36. The new canon has however, *mutatis mutandis*, the same provisions and penalties as the old one.

In Diocesan Calendars the matter is now put thus:—

"Declaration to be made and subscribed, and Oath to be taken and subscribed, by all persons previously to their being ordained Deacon or Priest.

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- (ii) "I, A. B., about to be admitted to the Holy Order of —, do solemnly make the following Declaration: I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed and none other, except as far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.
- (iii) "Oath of Canonical Obedience."

GENERAL EFFECT OF SUBSCRIPTION

It would be interesting to consider—in the abstract—the expedience of subscription, the influence upon independent thought and conscience, the reasonableness of exacting a solemn oath from men who (by reason of comparative youth and immaturity, and the traditions of home, of school, of college) are scarcely out of pupillage, or capable of undertaking independent investigation, or of forming an independent judgment.

Should persons in this position be called upon to pledge themselves for all time? It raises the whole question of vows and their irrevocability.

What would have been the present state of affairs in the Church and in the world, if absolute freedom of thought and expression had been inculcated and practised from the beginning, no man can tell. Doubtless, very different, for good or (as some may say) for evil. In an

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imperfect state like the present, one might be disposed to allow that the full exercise of freedom at early stages of human development would tend to instability and danger. One simply raises the point because in the realm of science and philosophy there is now an approximation to this absolute enfranchisement, and it depends very much upon the clergy whether this freedom shall be also extended to theology.

Members of the Church of England were not alone in seeking for relief from the yoke of subscription. In their case, even before the formal change had been effected, mental reservation had been introduced, and a laxity of interpretation had crept in, so that the revolution had been silently discounted. The publication of *Essays and Reviews* and of Colenso's works had stirred men's minds, and further results in the way of relaxation of vows had appeared in the form of Acts dealing with the indelibility of the marriage vow (1857), and of Holy Orders (Clerical Disabilities Relief Act, 1870).

A comparison between the terms of the 1603 Declaration and those of the new canon reveals the great difference subsisting between the title and the substance; and completely justifies the changed attitude towards our formularies demanded by the spirit of the present day.

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EFFORTS AFTER FREEDOM

Further, during the last half century, Dissenting ministers (whilst ostensibly following the Trust Deeds of their several denominations) have arrogated to themselves great liberty in the interpretation of Scripture and of the symbols of their faith. It will be remembered that the late Mr. C. H. Spurgeon delivered several philippics against preachers of his own body, whom he loudly denounced as being "on the down grade." Recently, a further indication has been furnished, in Scotland, in relation to the appeal of the "Wee Kirk" against the "Free Kirk," before the House of Lords in 1904. The issues disclosed by that judgment moved the Government to insert a clause in the Bill (introduced into the House of Commons in 1905) according liberty to a Church or denomination to vary its standards of faith and doctrine within certain limits without, *ipso facto*, being considered guilty of committing a breach of continuity, and consequently of suffering the loss of its distinctive name or of its title to property and endowments.

These facts are adduced in order to show the existence and growth of a feeling in men's minds generally, that a relaxation is expedient in respect of subscription to Articles of Faith. One is conscious that the existence of such a tendency does not, of necessity, justify itself, but it may suffice to note its prevalence.

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HONESTY OF POSITION

So much for the history of the subject. Now, for a few words in relation to its application to the special point before us—viz., the honesty of men retaining their position as teachers and the emoluments of their livings, when such a change of view, or expansion of view, has taken place, as to cause them to diverge, more or less seriously, from the opinions they were taught to consider orthodox at the beginning of their ministry.

Some minds are so constituted as to enable them to give an off-hand answer to such a question as this. Indeed, that would probably be one's first impulse. But the subject, in respect of the Church at large and its future, is by no means so simple as it looks.

WHO IS TO BE THE JUDGE?

Who, or what party, is to be considered the accredited guardian and interpreter of what is orthodox, or what is heretical, in respect of our Articles of Faith—our Canons—our Formularies? One cannot ignore the existence of parties within the Church, or the wide divergence of view and feeling characterizing these various sections. We have all heard of declarations on the part of one section that members of the other section were but Jesuits in disguise; that their real home was the Roman Communion; that they were eating the

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bread of the Church of England whilst they were apostates and traitors at heart. *Per contra*, Ritualists look upon Low Churchmen with the greatest scorn, and assert that they have no part or lot in Catholic tradition or in true sacramental apprehension.

The consequence would be that if—let us say—the Presidents of the English Church Union and of the Church Association were called upon to purge any assembly of churchmen according to their individual views—the former would excommunicate one half and the latter the remainder!

GENERAL LAXITY

The fact is that none of us obey the law, the canon, or the rubric, in all literality and completeness. We are warranted in our defect, by custom, by convenience, by the example of those in high places, and by a common-sense desire to effect the greater good of our people.

This is professed openly in the case of certain of the canons, and (more or less shamefacedly and apologetically) in respect of the rubrics.

CHANGE IN PUBLIC OPINION

There is no doubt that a changed conception is slowly filtering down into the minds of many students with reference to the genesis, intent, and interpretation of the Prayer Book and Articles—not to mention the Holy Scriptures. A

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generation or two ago, it was thought that both the positive and negative poles of belief and practice were touched by our formularies and Articles of Belief. The fact is that the Prayer Book was set forth but as a Directory—a guide—to Common Worship; to meet a grave national crisis; at a time, be it remembered, when the people and the priest (the ordinary parish priest) were, more or less, ignorant and incapable of taking or following an initiative. Therefore, it was imperative that the rulers of the Church should promulgate a Directorium to order what *might* be done—not what *must* be done; and to give an indication—not a special (and, by no means, an irrevocable) command.

The Articles were promulgated as a body of divinity—avowedly partial and incomplete—but suitable to the time, and to the exigencies and controversies of the time.

It could hardly have crossed the minds of the Reformers that this Book and these Articles should remain, practically, without change for three centuries and a half, and that their publication would have the effect of paralysing freedom of thought and expression for an indefinitely long period.

One is not insensible to the fact that a certain unity and continuity have been secured—but at what a price! One may even buy gold too dear. The existence of bitterly opposed parties within the Church—the lack of comprehensiveness exhibited towards the best alike of puritan

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and catholic thought, so that (in the present day) our so-called "National" Church is in a minority in the Three Kingdoms—that is the price the Church of Christ has had to pay!

PERIODICAL REVISION

It were much to be wished that, in the interests of evolution of thought—of scientific and historical theology—of development—of comprehensiveness—it were possible to make a concerted effort, every half century or so, to revise our Articles and formularies. One allows that something would be lost in respect of tradition and continuity; but the process would be provocative of reason and thought; it would reduce dissent; it would turn men's attention to the fact that continuity of interest, of charity, of effort, of devotion to God's message through Christ, constitute, after all, the true continuity and apostolic succession.

As has been remarked, it is somewhat singular that whilst a cleric may take up all modern ideas about astronomy and the other sciences (altering materially the point of view from which he regards the Deity—His power and government); further, that whilst he may deal with impunity with the Prayer Book Services in such a manner, *e.g.*, (on the one side) as to rob the Sacraments of operative grace, or (on the other) to assimilate the Holy Eucharist with the name and attributes of the Mass in the Roman Church;

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yet that the most scathing rebuke is reserved for him when he accepts the best attested conclusions of Higher Criticism in respect of the Bible. Herein the Romans take up a safe and well-considered position, viz., that the Church comes *first*, and that she is the guardian and interpreter of Holy Writ—from which coign of vantage she blunts or turns aside the shafts of imperfect or hasty criticism.

THE SCRIPTURES

On the other hand, the English Church—not formally in her records, for Article XVIII. is vague enough; but implicitly, mainly through Puritan influence—has put the Bible in place of the Pope, by the erection of the fence of verbal inspiration. This has been varied in practice, and may not be explicitly avowed; but one cannot help seeing that the confession of faith of many of our apologists amounts to nothing less than verbal inspiration in a crude form.

The Broad Churchman, however (whilst acknowledging the unique position occupied by the Biblical Library), is quite prepared to submit it to the same test, trial, and research as those to which any other book may be subjected. He feels bound to admit that the volume is a compilation from different sources; that it conforms to the laws governing the genesis and growth of literature of the time and country where the several books originated; that it possesses the

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defects and blemishes of books similarly put together; that it has been altered, enlarged, even mutilated (to suit the prepossessions of opposing sects); that its various elements do not go beyond the records and beliefs of their time in respect of historical and scientific accuracy; that the Bible, progressively, represents the moral cultivation of the individual and the race; so that we must be warned by its imperfections as well as allured by its charms.

It must be confessed by every unprejudiced thinker that much has been read into the Bible that does not really exist there; that a wrong use has been made of it as a mere armoury of texts; that every part has been wrongly assumed to conform to the same standard and to be susceptible to equal valuation; and that conventional terms (such as, *e.g.*, "The Books of Moses," "The Psalms of David") have been freely used, in such wise as to mislead the unwary.

But, when all is said and done, the Broad Churchman is ready to admit that the Scriptures—even as we have them—altered by fraud or accident—curtailed here—enlarged there—mis-translated in numberless passages—are indispensable to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth of every son of man; that no other book comes anywhere near them, that (compared with the sacred books of every other nation) they are immeasurably, incomparably, superior.

Surely this furnishes sufficient justification for

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his position. He realizes, with thankfulness, that he can assimilate the best results of the Higher Criticism, and of scientific investigation of every description, without interfering with his belief in the Supreme Being—His power, His goodness, His government of the universe, His manifestation in Christ, His direction of His creatures, His fatherly chastisement, His faculty of full and free forgiveness.

He is but confirmed in the belief that we are the children of God, that we have a place to fill, a work to do, a destiny to realize, an influence to exert over others. After all, these are the essentials of belief; the details must be added in respect of time and space according to individual character, position, and work.

If we have any belief in the Universal Fatherhood of God, and, therefore, in Universal Religion, we must believe that (in accordance with particular circumstances of time, place, thought, and language) men learn but slowly to express their ideas as to the person, work, and redemptive work of the Divine. These ideas are now necessarily wide of the truth because God is what He is—so *great*; and because man is what he is—so *little*. Man's conclusions, therefore, must be altogether incomplete and unworthy; since, even now, we are just entering the *childhood* of religion—just experiencing the stirrings of our *first* faith.

Mankind has ever been seeking for an infallible authority. At first, he found it in a Pope; anon, he found it in a Book; but, in truth, there is not

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—and for wise reasons, there is not intended to be—an infallible authority save and except the witness to God in every man's soul. For the rest (paradoxical as it may seem), *probability* is the rule of life; the search after truth is intended to have an educative effect; almost more potent indeed—so far as this world is concerned—than the possession of truth itself.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

It is clear that the world is moving on—that fresh thoughts and speculations are arising—fresh problems constantly presenting themselves for solution. It is true “there may be nothing absolutely new under the sun”—yet old thoughts and theories may be presented under a new guise. It is also clear that the individual must and should move with the world.

It is conceivable that a man, after forty or fifty years of ministerial life, may think the same thoughts and occupy the same theological position as he did on the day of his ordination; but the conclusion to which we should come respecting such a mental paralytic would be that he had never really *thought* at all, but had merely chewed the cud of a stale theology. “The man who never makes a mistake never makes anything.” So runs the proverb.

In the present day, most men *think*—many think *deeply*; a few take an independent line in respect of those studies they obediently pursued in time

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past on the lines laid down by a master ; they now lead where formerly they followed.

If we deny to free thought its birthright, we inevitably stifle inquiry and discussion ; and stereotype an imperfect state. Had this rule been universal, Abraham never would have quitted Ur, Moses would have died in Egypt, our Lord would have had but small justification for His denunciation of the Pharisees and the Jewish people. Furthermore (to turn to the history of the Christian Church), the abuses and corruptions of the Middle Ages would even now be clinging to the Bride of Christ ; another Tetzels would be selling Indulgences ; another Hildebrand, or Leo X., would be sitting on the papal throne ; the fires of Smithfield would yet be burning ; our land would be still under the iron heel of Rome !

RATIONALE OF ROMAN CHURCH

The Roman Church has been gifted with this virtue of consistency. For better, for worse, she has stood to her guns. She is as dogmatic to her own sons—as contemptuous of the faith and practice of alien children—as of yore. Still, if she dared, would she burn a Jerome or a Huss—wage war against heretics—do to death reformers within the pale like Savonarola, and silence the voice of science and reason in the person of a Galileo. There is a certainty—a grandeur—about this which attracts and attaches minds of a weak, indolent, and superstitious type—but it

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is not of the spirit of true religion. *She* stands still, but *the world* moves on—" *E pur si muove!*" as the great astronomer said when he rose from his knees before those who had condemned him. He was right, and the whole Church wrong. For a time, this attitude makes for strength; but in due course, and inevitably, this strength becomes weakness. In a mediæval legend, it is recorded that a man smote his antagonist with an enchanted sword, so that the weapon cut through helm and corslet; but its stroke was so fine that there was no apparent harm done. "Shake yourself," said the smiter; and his foe shook himself, and fell apart in two pieces! So with the Roman Church—the spirit is the spirit of a man—limited—easily satisfied—unsympathetic—dictatorial! Not so would Christ be learned!

Any manifestation of the same spirit by the authorities of the Anglican Church would be foreign to the genius, and treachery to the history, of her communion; foreign also to true knowledge, true faith, true religion. It might have been possible once—it is possible no longer. No longer are we living in the Dark Ages; the criteria of truth—the elements of faith—have altered. The clergy of the Anglican Church—above all others—should be chary of stifling free discussion, and deprecating change. If they justify the Reformation of the sixteenth century, how can they deny the possibility of a Reformation yet to come? That a second Reformation is needed must, indeed, be admitted. No man—no party—is satisfied with

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the existing state of things ; but this Reformation—when it is imminent—must be carried out on broad principles.

READJUSTMENT OF POSITION

The time has arrived, at which—if love of truth only prevailed—a readjustment of our position as teachers in the English Church should be attempted ; when the Bible should be retranslated, its contents set out in proper form, and interpreted on new lines ; when the Book of Common Prayer should be modified, and the Articles, Canons, even the Creeds, readjusted.

APOLOGIA

If only a part is allowed of what has been claimed, we see that there is something to be said for the Broad Churchman. He is but following the tendency of his time, of his own nature—may we, therefore, say—of God? He is engaged in the discovery of truth, even as the philosopher in respect of physical science, who (but only in these latter days) is permitted, with general approval, to cut himself loose from outworn traditions and to accept the latest conclusions warranted by study and experiment. After all, the free thinker is the true churchman, the true student, the true exponent of God, and of the truth of God.

We allow that theology is the queen of sciences,

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and that moral truth is elaborated in a different sphere from that which includes the physical ; yet ought the differences of investigation and treatment to be so diverse when—as is acknowledged—these two kinds are originated by the same Divine Mind, elucidated by the same human faculties, exhibited in the same tendency of action, and ultimately intended to form a perfect whole before the throne of God ?

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that there is something to be said from the side of the conservative and orthodox. The Broad Church clergyman has contracted solemn obligations which, to some critics, appear to be disregarded by him and set at nought ; he is a teacher as well as a student ; what he says and does in respect of the delivery of that which seems to him to be new truth may be a scandal to many of the unlettered and immature amongst the faithful. The more censorious amongst them may even allege that he is paid to teach one thing, whilst he teaches the opposite.

Of course, everything ought to hinge upon the consideration whether what he has put aside is false, and what he has adopted is true.

EFFECT OF PERSECUTION

If you turn out of the ministry all men of critical and independent mind, you weaken the Church ; you make it a haven of refuge for the dull, slothful, unreflective, unintelligent ; you

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deprive our Communion of one of its chief glories—viz., its comprehensiveness; you foster hypocrisy as well as mediocrity. We have an example of this evil in a neighbouring Church. We are told that (partly by reason of its isolation and its innate Protestantism due to the rebound from Romanism) its mode of election to bishoprics and incumbencies has the effect that no one is chosen unless he is what is called “safe”—*i.e.*, a man generally with but little pretension to research, scholarship, or independent judgment—simply good, quiet, inoffensive, but certainly mediocre.

We have put the case as strongly as possible on the heterodox side in order to evoke public discussion. One acknowledges that there are dangers in too rapid an advance, in too complete a break with the past, in too great a readiness to give credence to every new-fangled theory—but even these dangers are preferable to indifference, torpor, or death!

DO WE BELIEVE?

IT is always disturbing when people begin to inquire into their faith or their digestion ; but the question itself, "Do I believe, or do I not?" and the interest it always evokes, constitute a sign of the times in which we live, and of the stage of transition we have reached.

One may suggest that a solution of the doubt may be found in the assertion that there are certain root-ideas in which the generality of people in this country believe—such as those connected with the existence and personality of a God, with a Revelation, with a Saviour, with individual Responsibility and ultimate Retribution. Such mental and moral ideas as these (though they may remain unrealized in perfect demonstration) have yet become so familiar and so illuminative of life and destiny as to be almost axiomatic.

Another question propounded as to "whether believers live up to their convictions" cannot be answered without qualification ; for one must allow that (whilst the judgment of most professing Christians is sound) their feeling is oftentimes wrongly engaged and their will defective, so that the existence and operation of conscience—which, at times, makes cowards of

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us all—is capable of being appealed to with effect ; the more vividly whensoever that faculty recovers itself and exchanges “ the still, small voice ” for the sound of the trumpet ; seeing that, even when conscience is seemingly dead, it frequently astonishes the possessor by reviving with resurrective force on a sick or dying bed. Further, the reality of a certain degree of faith and spiritual life is evidenced by the existence of morality and good living amongst many men who are professed unbelievers, and who have no sanction, either in themselves, or in their creed—the lead they follow being insensibly derived from that developed in the society around them, which, in truth, whether or not they allow it, is established on principles avowedly Christian.

Reference has been made to certain root-ideas which are derived from popular religion. In respect of these, there is no need to trouble oneself about alleged fluctuations of belief. Those primal ideas are fundamental, therefore they will ultimately make their way and enforce conviction. Naturally, for various reasons, there must be exceptions to every rule, good or bad. Man would not be free—as he largely is free—if individuals could not occasionally be found (by reason of very obstinacy, ill-will, and contrariety) to contradict opinions strongly felt and expressed by their neighbours.

The present unsettlement is largely due to the fact that certain beliefs—not axiomatic—are being overhauled. Such are : man's conception of the

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Deity, of His working, His method of revealing Himself ; man's interpretation of the Scriptures (books written by different men, at different times, in different lands, inspired with conceptions of truth, and illustrated by expressions, different from those in vogue amongst Western folk in these latter days), also his retrospection of the melancholy history of the Church from early times, as setting forth disputes, divisions, restraint of free thought and discussion, and the complete absence of the christian virtues of courtesy and charity.

Men have gone wrong by applying their own measure to the rule of faith and to revelation generally ; and by indulging in anthropomorphic ideas of God, as to the way in which He might be *supposed* to make Himself known to His creatures. Not only have men thus formed wrong opinions ; but, when possessed of authority and power, they have persecuted and murdered those whose conclusions were opposed to theirs—in some instances even in respect to scientific facts which are now accepted without demur.

The uprising of the present day is largely due to the emancipation of Science from a misleading Theology ; to the setting out in pursuit of the truth unveiled ; and to the desire to put aside, or reconsider, all prior judgments, and submit them to the most scrupulous tests that can be applied within the realm of observation and experiment. These influences have reacted even on discussions involving history ; albeit historical fact is only, in part, fitted for it—though, so far as may be,

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students should endeavour to pursue the scientific method of rigid investigation even in the study of historical and philological truth.

We are beginning to allow that nothing should be held sacred but the search after truth ; that, *e.g.*, the books composing the Bible should be studied like any other books ; or rather that, by reason of their claims, they should be subjected to still more rigid tests as to their genesis, and their external and internal evidence ; so that the whole investigation should be brought into line with that involved in respect of God's action in the natural world, viz., by applying the principle of Evolution to demonstrate a progressive growth even of morality and reason.

The present distress furnishes a great opportunity to the Church of England and its clergy to take the lead in the path of inquiry and reform. It is desirable that a revision be made of her Creeds, Formularies, Articles, and Canons, and the Lectionary and Psalmody dealt with, in such wise, that the words which the congregation are invited to make their own should not jar either upon the moral or historic sense. The need for revision is manifest to every unprejudiced observer. The Articles remain as they were set out at the Reformation. They were elaborated and put forth to meet a special state of things, and were not intended to furnish a complete body of divinity, or to cover the whole field of belief. The Prayer Book was compiled to meet the necessity then existing, and had relevance to

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the capacity of the clergy and congregations of the day. We need greater liberty than was either possible or desirable 300 or 350 years ago. Many of the directions, much of the language, savour of the archaic. Sympathetic and conservative action with reference to the pruning, rearrangement, and expansion of the Prayer Book and Articles were much to be desired. If it be alleged that this action would lead to revolution and schism, it may be replied that revolution and schism are even now upon us. At all events, let the first steps be taken—viz., relaxation of the terms of subscription, granting of greater liberty of Biblical interpretation, and of power to vary the iron rule of conformity to the Book of Common Prayer.

HOW FAR HAS RELIGION OBTAINED A REAL HOLD OF OUR PEOPLE?

PEOPLE are sometimes better—though generally worse—than their creed. Their theory, their doctrine, may be sound, whilst the practice based upon that theory is frequently imperfect. The profession may be all that could be desired, whilst the daily life is altogether inconsequent, and even contrary, to their faith.

This is illustrated—metaphorically, perhaps—even in the early pages of Holy Writ. Perfect innocence was no guarantee against perfect failure—the first murderer was only once removed from the first of the mortal sons of God. Noah (who walked with God) presents an awful spectacle as a drunkard—Abraham (the friend of God) as a perverter of the truth—Jacob (the Israel of God) as a deceiver—David (the man after God's own heart, the sweet singer of Israel) as a murderer and adulterer.

As individually, so collectively, the Israelites, the chosen people of God, turned aside, ever and anon, like a broken bow ; their record being besmirched by grievous lapses and well-nigh constant failure. Polygamy, concubinage, failure to render the accustomed sacrifice and offering, distinguished

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every age of their history, and the times of their ignorance—during many centuries of development—God winked at,¹ though He never, at any time, condoned their sin.

Observe, too, the record of the New Testament, and of the Apostles chosen by Christ to be His pupils and the depositaries of His truth. How slow of purpose, how forgetful of His charge, how dense of understanding, how impotent in counsel, how faithless in time of need! *One* betrayed, *another* denied, *all* forsook Him and fled, in the supreme moment of His fate.

A momentary gleam breaks forth in the early pages of the Acts of the Apostles. Lo! the infant Church has been able to put to shame all future records. In the first flush of spirituality she recognized the needs of the poor and destitute, and all her members rose to the occasion, by having but one purse, and by bringing all their goods into the common stock. Yet, even here, Ananias represented the evil element of the world, and was both covetous and a liar.

Furthermore, even then and there we read of dissensions, of controversies, such as those between Paul and Barnabas, and between Paul and Peter.

The Epistles disclose to us, incidentally, the difficulty experienced in weaning both Jew and Gentile from the evil memories of the past. The Great Apostle is frequently called upon to rebuke the members of the Corinthian, of the Galatian, and of other Churches of which he was the

¹ Acts xvii. 30.

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spiritual father, for a falling away in respect both of faith and practice; and to pronounce judgment upon certain individuals by name. We find, too, in these letters, hints of various heresies—gnosticism, and the like—which, ultimately, sorely vexed the Church.

The ecclesiastical history of the first few centuries—interesting and absorbing as it is—yet contains materials for bitter reflection. Religion here, as ever, was wounded in the house of its friends. When any particular heathen persecution ceased, disputes arose amongst the brethren (and even during times of persecution, in the case of the re-lapsed); scheming, deceit, forgery, were resorted to; even physical force was used in extremity; and the partisans of some doctrine—or the apologists of some cause—hesitated not to enforce their claims by physical violence rather than by pure reason or affectionate remonstrance.

Erasmus tells the story of a certain Jew of the Middle Ages who—troubled in his mind with doubts as to the superiority of his religion to that of the Christians—was advised to go to Rome, as the centre of Western Christendom, in order to study the proofs and evidences of Christianity to the greatest advantage. He accordingly went, and, on his return, proceeded to recount what he had heard and seen of the dissoluteness of the popes and the corruption of the clergy. Nevertheless, he announced his intention of leaving his old faith and embracing Christianity. When charged by his friends with

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inconsistency, he replied that his experience had convinced him that Christianity must be true; for if it were false, Almighty God would not have suffered it to survive and abound in spite of such corruption. Somewhat of the same feeling possesses us as we suffer our eyes to range over the history of the past. Mournful as is this survey, in parts, during the early years of struggle and conflict, matters became much worse when Christianity triumphed over the heathen world and the heathen gods, and became the dominant faith. Gibbon can hardly be called an impartial witness in his treatment of Christianity, yet there is enough of truth in his account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire to lead to bitter reflection on the part of those who are jealous as to the purity and innocence of the Faith.

Again, read the records of the Papacy. Observe the worldly spirit guiding the policy of the Pontiffs—a policy supported, in part, by forged Decretals, by lying, perjury, and deceit. Look at the lust of power—the greed of gold—exhibited by those in high places. Regard the dissoluteness of life, the cynical indifference even to the elementary sanctions of religion, displayed by many of the popes, the ignorance, vice, and corruption of a large section of the clergy, both secular and monastic. Observe, too, how the primitive faith is tampered with, the original truth obscured, and the fatal extent to which ignorance, error, and superstition are suffered to invade the temple of the Lord.

Real Hold of Our People?

But let us come to the England of our day. Has our national destiny, which has led to such a marked advance of material prosperity, also led to a development of religious truth? Is there now exhibited amongst us the simplicity of the first ages, combined with the ripe and chastened experience which should have been expected to accrue in later times? Perhaps, opinions would differ as to the precise nature of the reply. In many things we are certainly different from the early Christians, and better than our forefathers in the Middle Ages. Neither would we be pessimistic enough to assert that things are altogether corrupt amongst us; that there are not many causes for thankfulness; that many noble men and women do not even now adorn the doctrine of Christ, and confess Him as their Saviour in all things. It is undoubtedly foolish, as well as false, to bring charges indiscriminately, and always to decry the present in comparison with the past.

Yet, even whilst making all reservations and deductions whatsoever, we cannot express ourselves as satisfied with the existing state of things, or as prepared to acknowledge that the development of religion has been as consistent and successful as might have been anticipated. Neither can we say that the state of morality and holy living amongst our people is in advance of the religion of the first centuries, as much as that religion was in advance of the faith it displaced.

It must be confessed that a wonderful progression might legitimately have been expected in

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response to the Church's constant prayer—"Thy Kingdom come"—taught to the disciples by the Lord of the Kingdom Himself. Whether the nearer advent of that Kingdom has thus been hindered by man's ignorance and wilfulness, one is not in a position to say ; but such a thought naturally crosses the mind.

One great drawback to the full exercise of the influence of religion in our midst, and of its increase abroad, is due to the multiplication of sects, and the rivalry, jealousy, and dispersion of effort which inevitably follow. Another drawback is furnished by the divisions within our own Church—one party sinning by way of excess, another by way of defect. Men—in a measure learned, sensible, and pious—spend time and energy in wrangling about trivialities such as vestments, incense, and holy water ; thus forgetting the weightier matters of the Gospel—a Saviour's offering to satisfy a soul's need. Herein a puerile and meretricious spirit has vexed the sacred heritage of the Lord.

Again, a spirit of worldliness has overcome the Church. There is a form of godliness without the power ; religion has largely become a mere matter of course—an hereditary possession, like family portraits or plate. Many well-disposed people fulfil the demands of religion—baptism, and the like—as social functions only, because their forefathers did, because it is the right thing, because it admits of their paying compliments to a select circle of friends, and not because of the

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essence of truth and salvation thereto attached. Religion has become the fashion for ceremonial, archæological, ecclesiological, or social reasons, not for its own sake, or for the perfecting of inward grace. There is too much taken for granted—men rarely test the truth for themselves, or put it to experimental proof. They apply not its principles; they inquire not; or, if they inquire, they enter into controversy merely in order to obtain the victory, not to advance the Truth. Thus, everything is outward rather than inward. We leave out God, and put in the first place, the Church—our own friends—our own interests.

A Christian should be a marked man in the highest sense—marked out by his appearance, dress, gesture, and speech, as well as by his declarations, character, and life. He should be restrained, grave, honest, virtuous, distinguished alike in business and amusement; courageous, indifferent to the world's praise or blame; not self-seeking, but desirous of advancing others' good; standing up for peace, for truth, and righteousness; unselfish, ready to give time, money, and talents to the Lord's service—ever *in* the world, yet never *of* the world!

Are these qualifications just? Are they requisite? Then are Christian people generally—are we ourselves—distinguished by such characteristics? What can we say to these questions? *Charity* must answer for our neighbours—*conscience* for ourselves.

There are many evils in our midst—many

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blots in our social system, which are passing strange in a Christian land. There are many things said and done, during the week, by church-goers and chapel-goers, which they would find it hard to defend on the Sunday. Our commercial morality is tainted ; there is much roguery displayed in respect of weight and measure, and also in reference to the adulteration of numberless articles of food and drink, of medicine and clothing. Employers and employed do not work in harmony ; the bonds of family life are becoming relaxed ; religion in our primary and secondary schools is placed at a disadvantage ; Sunday is not so much regarded as it was, or as it should be. The Divorce Court, and our Courts of Justice generally, present vivid revelations of our vicious social system ; which disclosures surprise us not when we walk abroad at night in the streets of our vast metropolis and observe how morality, and even decency, are set at naught. Now and then, some *cause célèbre* shows us the extent of immorality and the consequent repetition of nameless crimes on the part both of men and women. Family life is frequently tainted at its source, and the rising generation polluted. Immorality and drunkenness are intertwined—twin brothers of Death—accompanied to their bourne by poverty, vice, crime, violence, deceit, and disease.

Religion languishes, and is the subject of division and acrimonious discussion. Divine worship is often cold and formal. Many professors are

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self-seeking and idle; the conduct of sacred offices is oftentimes dull and dry, devoid of all spirituality and fervour; the administration of the Sacraments is too frequently mechanical—but little self-examination being involved—or amendment—or progression.

The raising of money for religious purposes is difficult, so that questionable means are resorted to—such as bazaars, raffles, and balls.

The cure for all these evils is to be found in the realization of our state, the confession of our fault; in contrition as to the past, in amendment as to the future; in sole reliance upon the Master, so that we may be enabled to put forth earnest, faithful, persistent, and successful endeavour.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

THE question of Sunday Observance has been recently forced to the front by the leaders of religious thought and practice, and there is no doubt that it touches each of us as citizens and Christians, and that it is a matter concerning which the various sections of the community should strive, without delay, to arrive at a working agreement. It cannot be denied that, in respect of this and other religious duties, the nation, as a nation, has got somewhat out of hand.

The problem is more complicated than appears at first sight, and is becoming still more involved as time goes on, not only by reason of the increasing complexity and variety of modern life, of the greater love of change and pleasure, of increased facilities for locomotion, of the interest attaching to golf and other outdoor games, but also by reason of the influx of a considerable number of foreigners—Christian and non-Christian—whose ideas and customs, in this particular, are different from our own. It may be well to remember, that when we lament Sunday motoring, entertaining, and pleasure-taking generally, those whom we criticize may, in many cases, be Jews or Mohammedans, whose sacred day is not our day,

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and who may be really devout in what (to them) is proper as to time and place.

Partly as the cause, partly as the result, of these forces, there must also be mentioned the change of feeling amongst ourselves respecting religion and its manifestation. Broader views are taken, and traditional observances as to the keeping of Lent, and the like, are less honoured. Along with these changes a difference was inevitable in the manner of "keeping Sunday." Contrast the old-fashioned way of observing the day in our childhood—even as to Sunday books and Sunday games (Noah's Ark, &c)—with the mode we adopt in respect to our own boys and girls. No one really wishes to get rid of a sacred rest-day. Even the French revolutionists of 1789 and the following years were compelled to give up the attempt to effect such a desecration of the ancient habits and beliefs of the people, and quite recently the Parisian authorities have been led to take steps to secure Sunday rest for workers.

Sunday observances may be regarded from the following points of view:—

- (a) The order of Nature;
- (b) The physical;
- (c) The economic—commercial—industrial;
- (d) The legal;
- (e) The religious;
- (f) The social—whether personal or general.

The division of the year into months, and the months into shorter periods, has been practised

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by every nation raised above the savage state. The latter division has been determined by the phases of the moon, so that a lunation would be divided either into three or four equal parts—generally into the latter. In particular countries, such as Babylonia, the days in certain months on which these periods fall were considered “fortunate or unfortunate,” and were constituted “lucky or unlucky”; on these occasions certain rites and duties were enjoined; but it is doubtful whether, *e.g.*, in such a community as Babylon, the Sabbath meant, strictly speaking, a rest for *man*, apart from the resting of the gods from anger and disdain, or that it was regarded even by the Jews (as the Sunday came to be looked upon amongst Christians) as a day specially and exclusively consecrated to religious observances.

(a) THE ORDER OF NATURE

It may be noted that, in the vegetable kingdom, rest is diurnal and seasonal, and is not confined to one particular day in a series. In the animal kingdom, in respect chiefly of female life, there is a periodicity which varies with the genus, and, strange to say, in the human subject, roughly corresponds with the lunation; but, in respect of animal life generally, the creatures around us are not conscious of any natural Sabbath, the secretion of milk, *e.g.* (and therefore the necessity for milking cattle) goes on day by day—on Sundays and Mondays alike.

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Naturally, in the life of a community such as ours, it is important that beasts of burden, heavily weighted and often unmercifully worked during six days, should have a seventh day of respite ; but in the wild life of Nature there is no Sabbath.

(b) THE PHYSICAL

Strict Sabbatarians contend, very justly, for one day in seven as a rest ; but they seem to forget that their claim does not cover the setting apart of one specific day, viz., the Sunday, or the hallowing of that day above all others for religious observance. An atheist might equally sustain the same contention for a seventh-day rest, inasmuch as it is capable of being supported on purely physical grounds, especially in this busy nerve-destroying age ; but the contention—by whomsoever put forth—is satisfied by the choice of any given day of the week—whether Monday or Sunday. For instance, although in Paris the national museums and places of entertainment are open all day on Sundays, it does not follow that the attendants and artistes are deprived of their seventh-day rest—as a matter of fact this is vouchsafed to them in due course on the Monday.

Even Christians must learn to put themselves in their neighbour's place, and realize his limitations and difficulties, before condemning his practices.

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(c) THE ECONOMIC—COMMERCIAL—INDUSTRIAL

There must be undertaken and carried out on Sundays a certain kind and proportion of work on farms, in coal-mines, at ironworks, on board ship; in respect of the distribution of (perishable) articles of food; of the care and nursing of the young, the infirm, and the sick; the conduct of Divine Service and of Sunday Schools; but hard and unnecessary labour for personal and private profit in respect of the industrial and commercial side of life can be minimized or largely curtailed at the desire of man by the due exercise of forethought and specific arrangement. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Furthermore, to the thoughtful and generous, who recognize that one worker must make many, certain considerations are apparent; such as the following:—

(i) Even if one were able and willing to work seven days every week, it would not necessarily follow that the clear gain would be in the ratio of 7 to 6—frequently, indeed, it is observed, in such cases, that there is a greater tendency to accident and loss, or to a premature breakdown in health.

(ii) Even if worldly success actually followed continuous labour, that success might prove to have been dearly purchased by defiance of the laws both of Nature and Grace.

(iii) Even if one suffered in circumstances by abstention from work, and the competition of an unscrupulous rival, it would, sooner or later,

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be made clear that worldly gain does not necessarily spell worldly happiness ; and that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. A man owes something to himself—to his higher nature. This world is not all—Mammon is not the Supreme God.

(d) THE LEGAL

The Puritans, with their Old Testament proclivities, drew the cords of regulation and prohibition with great strictness. This naturally led to a revulsion of feeling at the Restoration, on this point, as on many others. The license which ensued was curbed by laws passed in 1677 (the twenty-ninth year of Charles the Second's reign), which laws have remained practically unaltered to the present time. It is unfortunate that the good sense of the community has not led to a revision. It is true that a "Sunday Act" was passed in 1781, but its provisions had not much effect.

As is well known, much of Sunday trading is carried on in London and other large towns in regard to the sale of food, tobacco, sweets, fish, milk, newspapers, as well as in respect of the calling of the barber. If any adverse action be taken in regard to this trading, it must be in accordance with the provisions of a measure more than 230 years old ! Even this law permitted exceptions in favour of articles clearly perishable. The preamble runs: "An Act restraining the performance of servile works, and the sale of goods, except milk,

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at certain hours, and meat in public-houses, and works of necessity and charity—on forfeiture of five shillings.”

Generally speaking, such a law discriminates between rich and poor. The rich man is shaved by his valet—who goes free; the poor man is shaved by the street barber, who is haled before the magistrate, and fined!

(e) THE RELIGIOUS

The plea for the exclusively religious observance of a seventh day may be said to be derived not from Natural, but from Revealed, Religion, viz., being based upon such references as are found in the early part of the Book of Genesis, in Exodus xx., and Deuteronomy v. In respect of these arguments, we have to submit that the early parts of Genesis are not intended in all cases to be literally interpreted. In the first two chapters, there is set before us a series of representations illustrating the main stages whereby the world was evolved out of a nebulous and chaotic state, and finally constituted a theatre of life. It was essential for dramatic purposes, in order to enforce interest and attention, that the Creator should be represented as finishing His work in so many distinct stages, and as resting at its completion. Inasmuch as the six days are not to be taken in the letter—for, indeed, the duration even of the early geologic day was very different from our “day”

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—so neither is the reference to the seventh day to be taken literally. We may not accept the crude anthropomorphic conception that the Almighty (like a mechanic constructing some machine) wound up the world, and then suffered it to revolve indefinitely ; for we naturally postulate, on the part of God, sustained power and constant renewal and superintendence.

Doubtless, there is deep meaning in the passage denoting the completion of the special intervention whereby the Divine Being constituted man as a moral agent in relation to Himself. This marked the beginning of a stage, the end of which was to be indicated by a further intervention leading to the embodiment of the ideal man, even Jesus Christ. In relation, however, to the obligation to us to keep the Sabbath, the reference breaks down in two points—viz., as to God's need of rest, (if such, indeed, be implied), and as to the choice of one "day" (such as ours) in seven.

It is true that, in early times, periods of seven days are marked in relation, *e.g.*, to the Deluge and other occurrences ; but, as we have seen, this is a natural division of time, adopted by many nations as well as by the Jews, yet not exclusively with a view to any distinct religious observance.

Further, it may be allowed that the story of the delivery of the Ten Commandments to Moses is expressed in the like dramatic form and spirit to that of the Creation. It now seems clear that the original compilers availed themselves of the well known and traditional hyperbolical methods of

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Eastern narration. The dictum was as true then as now—that no man had seen God or can see Him; but the phrases and descriptions employed in this and similar cases were adopted as the setting most appropriate, in the estimation of the writers, to express the great truth that God really speaks to the conscience and the heart of man, and lays down certain salient principles of conduct; in this manner, leading individuals and peoples to a solemn consecration to His service and to the expression of faith in respect of the Unseen and His laws.

The phrases: "Thus saith the Lord," "The Lord spake unto Moses," and the like, do not refer to communications made as from man to man; but rather to the subjective action of the *mind* and *spirit* of the Creator upon the *mind* and *spirit* of the creature. From this thought we derive an explanation of the statement: "In the image of God created He man"—*i.e.*, not in the outward likeness, but in the inward and spiritual, so that we can respond to the impulses of the Eternal, and call *that* "good" which God pronounces to be good, and *that* "evil" which He calls evil.

Probably, the commandments were originally simple forms, or "words," even as the sixth, seventh, and eighth now are—bearing a general resemblance to decrees found in compilations like the Laws of Hammurabi. Later, the fourth commandment would have been expanded in more than one way (*vide* Exod. xx. and Deut. v.). Its opening word "Remember" and its positive form

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—in which it differs from all the others—seem to indicate that it possessed use and authority long anterior to the time of Moses.

The reason given, in the first version, for its authorization, viz., that the world was made in six ordinary days, would cause embarrassment to all scholars, were it not incumbent upon them to make clear the non-natural sense in which the words are employed.

In Deut. v. 12, the opening words of the same commandment are: "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it"—the word "remember" not being employed. The reason also is entirely different—viz., "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt." This is a later version than that found in the Book of Exodus—the latter being chosen for use in the services of the Christian Church as being more general in its application.

It cannot be denied that the concession as to the subjective nature of the delivery of the commandments tends to weaken the sanction which Sab-batarians derive from the record; but it must be remembered that the arguments used by the straiter sect have been discounted for some time past, and that the strictness of observance insisted upon has led to much mischief, being mainly responsible for the revulsion of feeling that has been witnessed.

In truth, the genesis of the Christian Sunday has to be borne in mind, and the sanction which the Church, and the Church alone, has given to it. For example, members of the Church of England

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do not keep the Sabbath—they do not pretend to keep it. Even the Jews have seriously fallen away and, whenever possible, employ Gentile servants to perform their domestic work on that day. What was possible for their forefathers in their simple desert life, in an Eastern clime, is found to be impossible for the descendants in a country with a climate so variable as ours.

Doubtless, the Sabbath was kept with considerable strictness in Palestine in the days of our Lord, especially in Judea, and by the Pharisees. There was no subject on which our Saviour had so many disputes with the extremists—there was none on which He exercised His independence so freely. Witness His acts of healing, His defence of the same, and the notable declaration which persistent opposition led Him to make, to wit: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Those early Christians who were originally Jews seem to have observed the Sabbath and the Lord's Day alike; though, even so, the Lord's Day was kept after the Eastern manner—viz., from evening to evening. There seems no reason to doubt that this Lord's Day was chosen to mark the great fact of the Resurrection. It is, indeed, difficult to account for its choice on any other ground, and it is interesting to note that, conversely, it furnishes one of the proofs of that great event.

Gentiles and later generations of Christians either never accepted the Jewish Sabbath, or ultimately dropped its use and kept the Lord's Day alone. Finally, in accordance with the later

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civil usage in Western Christendom, the day was reckoned from midnight to midnight.

It would appear therefore, from this *résumé*, that the Christian Church had perfect authority and liberty to declare the manner in which the Lord's Day should be kept—*i.e.*, without any special reference to the Jewish Sabbath, or any undue reliance on the reasons furnished by the two versions of the fourth commandment.

It should be noted that there is a distinct danger to be faced and avoided. The use of the phrase "The Lord's Day" might seem to imply that it was a day different from all other days of the week, in respect of our thoughts and behaviour; that is to say, that *one* day was emphatically the Lord's Day, to the exclusion of all others; whereas, in reality, every day is a Lord's Day, and should be equally holy. The false conception above referred to has done untold harm in respect of our religious and social ideas, and has tended to self-gratulation and hypocritical satisfaction, inasmuch as it has led Anglicans to compare themselves, *e.g.*, with Roman Catholics and their "Continental Sunday." The sentiment may be carried too far which is embodied in the lines composed by Sir Matthew Hale: "A Sunday well spent brings a week of content."

We fail to note that the Latin-Roman conception is different from ours, and that their usage is, consequently, different. It is in accordance with the dictates of their conscience that they engage in religious exercises in the early morning, and equally

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according to the dictates of their conscience that they consider themselves free to take their pleasure in divers ways during the rest of the day. *Their* conscience is not *our* conscience; *ergo*, what would be sin to the Sabbatarian may be no sin to them. One allows that this concession requires to be carefully safeguarded.

Again, it should be observed that, in Roman Catholic countries, the faithful are enjoined to visit the house of God as a matter of obligation *every day*. In our adverse and partial criticism, we hardly take this fact into account.

(f) THE SOCIAL—WHETHER PERSONAL OR GENERAL

The true mode of dealing with this subject must be based on the assumption that the question is social and national as well as religious. Much harm has been done by well-meaning persons in putting it on a basis exclusively religious.

In the present day, in our complex social state, efforts in regard to Sunday observance will always fail unless they take into account all the factors of the case, and are broad-based on public expediency.¹

¹ Some districts of London are largely inhabited by Jews. These people are called upon by their religion to observe the Sabbath, and by the strict and literal law of the land to observe the Sunday also—thus to keep two days in every week free from trading. This is hard both on the small trader and on the small purchaser. Casual visitors to Houndsditch, on the Sunday, are astonished at the signs of buying and selling presented to their eyes; but, after all, this is mainly confined to Jews, whose conscience is clear as against any infraction of religious law, for *their* Sunday is not *our* Sunday.

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In respect of the general aspect, the practical upshot has come to be that the religious principle affects not the many but the few. In the hands of the elect, then, it lies to sanctify and uplift the day to a height that, unfortunately, cannot be reached by all the complex elements included in the State.

In taking account of all these variables, Christians must make allowance, and strive to set the highest example by way of recognizing three main principles of conduct, viz., what is due to themselves, to their bodies and souls—what is due to the bodies and souls of others—and, above all, what is due to God, Whose honour and glory our bodies and souls are intended to subserve.

In regard to any specific act on any specific day—a *fortiori*, the Sunday—the questions put by the individual Christian to himself, under the influence of an enlightened and a quickened conscience, as to the lawfulness of any particular sport or pleasure, should be: “Have I put God first?” “Have I truly discharged any special duty, or worship, or obligation due to this day?”

Much good may be done in a general way by improving the services in church, and furnishing the best of everything in the way of reading, preaching, and singing.

A RECONSIDERATION OF OUR BELIEFS

CONTEMPORANEOUSLY with the advance of knowledge and the improvement of mechanical skill and appliances, it has been found possible and profitable, in the industrial world, to work over again the rubbish-heaps found on the site of disused gold and silver mines, in order to recover much that preceding generations have cast away as worthless.

Doubtless, the same custom is followed—age by age—in the world of philosophic thought. But, in this direction, the difficulties are greater ; inasmuch as most men feel a distaste to hard and original thinking, being content slavishly to attach themselves to a school, or to a single exponent of a system. Therefore, we must perforce admit that the study of philosophy is at a discount, inasmuch as most men cannot, and many men will not, engage in its pursuit.

What has been said of philosophy may be said with greater force of a single branch of it—Religion. Religion has come to us mainly from one people—in many ways, a small and insignificant people originally undistinguished in the world of thought,

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art, war, discovery, invention, philosophy, and commercialism—pre-eminent only in the world of morals.

For their position—for their system of ethics and worship—they put forward the most tremendous claims; their God was the One Supreme—the God of the whole earth; their nation the sole depositary of the truth, being the only people which had been permitted to enter into Covenant with the Deity. Out of their nationality the Anointed One was to come, Who should establish His throne in Jerusalem, beat down all opposition, and rule over the nations gloriously.

These claims were sustained and carried forward by sage, prophet, and apostle—for their furtherance multitudes of confessors bled and of martyrs died.

Finally, the idea of the Universal God was accepted by the Jews as a cardinal principle. The Scriptures relating to Him were expressed in the Universal Language—Greek. The Apostle Paul and others—Roman citizens—went along the Roman highways proclaiming the Universal Faith in the Universal Tongue throughout the Universal Empire.

Such a combination of Universals proved irresistible, but the crowning mercy was found between three and four centuries after in the subversion of the Roman Empire by false friends and open foes, and the establishment of the Roman Pontificate on its ruins. The Pope took the place of the Emperor and Pontifex Maximus; the Church, of the Basilica; the Decretal, of the Imperial Mandate.

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From this exalted throne, during many generations, tradition and authority reigned supreme. Independence of investigation, of thought, of judgment, was discouraged, finally to be crushed altogether out of existence by Council or Inquisition.

The Reformation brought about a *transfer*—not a *destruction*; authority still prevailed; “presbyter” was but “priest” writ large; the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession paralleled the Decrees of the Council of Trent. Private judgment was exalted as the supreme authority.

What is the position in the present day in respect of our own Church as reflected by the pulpit and the pew? To a large extent, the same ideas prevail.

It is declared that there is but one covenant nation—the Jews; but one set of inspired writings—the Bible; but one voice of authority—the National Church. All other nations are heathens, worshipping idols—all therefore are doomed to be devoted to outer darkness unless they absolutely give up their own beliefs and accept Christianity on the Western model, as the “orthodox” understand and interpret it.

In the consideration of this great question two principles may be laid down:—

(a) The desirability of retaining—both in faith and practice—whatever has been found efficacious in the past—*the conservative principle*.

(b) The desirability of adapting the form of truth and its presentation to the necessities of the present, and to what we may conceive to be involved in the call of the immediate future—*the progressive principle*.

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Every thinker would be disposed to accept the first desideratum. The continuity of teaching—the need of dogmatic instruction, of the holding on to the past in relation to the constitution, teaching, sacramental grace, ritual, formularies, and ceremonies of the visible Church—all depend on this principle. If it were absolutely surrendered, and the attempt made to commence the setting up of a Church and the elaboration of a Creed—*de novo*—nothing but disintegration would result within the existing body, and also absolute separation from every conservative historic Church.

But many persons would interpret the principle in a hard-and-fast sense, and would base their position and formula of absolute changelessness on the phrase: "The faith once delivered unto the saints"; their Creed, in effect, would be: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." Their prototype is to be found in the Old Testament, viz., Lot's wife—and we know what became of *her*!

In the present day, these conservative beliefs are strenuously held by tens of thousands of attached adherents—they form their rule of life—the national Churches of Christ occupy a commanding position in the eye of the world and in the moulding of their respective societies—missionaries are sent out in multitudes from Christian lands to evangelize the heathen in the dark places of the earth.

Yet no close observer can be satisfied with the existing state of things. The major part of the population is largely untouched by the calls

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of personal religion—missionary efforts are largely discounted by our feebleness and division, in addition to being opposed and thwarted by the earnest belief and action—whether racial, or religious, or both—of the Hindoo, Japanese, or Mohammedan.

It may be allowed that larger, more beneficent, results in every direction would be realized if the doctrines of Christianity were more faithfully proclaimed and more strenuously followed ; but inquiry may be permitted as to whether the doctrine of development is not applicable to our religion derived from the traditional sources with which we are familiar ; whether the old truths might not be the better for a new setting and interpretation ; whether the mode of their presentation might not be varied so as to adapt it to the changed condition of the time.

Morality may not be a matter of discovery—we believe it to be based on religion, which is generally treated as a revelation. Yet what is revelation but a discovery—an opening out—a progressive making known to the sense, experience, judgment, and conscience of mankind of things that tend to mould the character, to move the life ?

It is becoming clear that the only path of progress—even of safety—is to be found in the patient and intelligent carrying out of the second, or progressive, principle.

This can be done only by spiritually-minded men, earnest, wise, courageous, determined ; who, by patient continuance, and both by their preaching

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and living—in spite of opposition and misrepresentation—consistently bend all their energies in the prosecution of the work of revision and extension. It is a grave question how far party spirit precludes such men even from being raised up within the Church.

Most reforms are brought about by influences from without. It may be that the point with which we are dealing will be no exception to the rule. Certainly, whether consciously or not, science, agnosticism, rationalism, and unrestricted criticism have all exerted influences—either attractive or repulsive—to this end.

But some important principles still need to be debated—*e.g.*, What importance is to be attached to existing religions and creeds and sacred books? Here comes in the Comparative Study of Religions. In the first place, we want an adequate supply of material—adequate in respect both of time and place; then, we desiderate an intelligent and unbiassed conclusion from a survey of the evidence thus furnished.

It will be seen how seriously these questions affect the things that now are—the constitution, work, ideal, and destiny of the Church of to-day and of the future. Further, how vitally they affect the conduct and ideal of missions to the so-called heathen. Hitherto, these have proceeded along narrow, well-defined lines—“the *heathen* were all wrong, *we* were all right; they must absolutely resign most of their habits, forms, modes of thought—*i.e.*, they must strip themselves of their

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old beliefs, and give themselves up to all that is new. They must put on the new religion and the appliances, forms, and ceremonies with which religion is associated in our Western minds." In plain language, this would amount to the putting away of all traditionary lore and experience associated with their old hope and faith and life, and the taking unto themselves a cast-iron system of faith, morals, and worship such as has been developed by people of a different race, living in a land hundreds or thousands of miles distant, and in a clime absolutely different from their own.

Further—we ask—are the Old and New Testament Scriptures to be put on a pedestal apart, or are others—the religious books of the Hindoos, Persians, Mohammedans, &c.—to be regarded with a similar sympathetic interest and interpreted with the same care and respect? Are the Jews to be accorded absolute "pride of place," or should it be admitted that every other nation has had a distinct message for mankind? Is it to be *Palestine*—or the *world*? Is the revelation of Jesus Christ and His Apostles to be interpreted from the point of view of Jewish ethics, as an unchanging and unchangeable rule, or is it to be regarded as adaptable to different nations in different ways at different times? Is it to be *crystallized* or *fluid*; *intensive* or *extensive*?

If only it were possible to be learned in all the learning of the past, and so to catch the living spirit of the present age as to go forth to the denizens

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of the lands of the earth and the islands of the sea with a message instinct with perfect wisdom—both divine and human—to the end that that which was best and purest in their nature might serve as a basis for the full and complete teaching of Him Who came to lay down principles of faith and hope and love *for all*, it can hardly be doubted that every nation of the earth should at length truly hear in its own tongue the wonderful works of God.

Then would follow certain notable results ; viz., the establishment of a true, yet varied and distinct, type of religion in every land, in full accordance with the traditions, genius, spirit, and destiny of its people ; eventuating in the consolidation of these various forms into such a full, complete, comprehensive embodiment of Christianity as the world never yet has seen, and never will see so long as the existing system prevails.

OUR UNHAPPY DIVISIONS—AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

OFTENTIMES, one is so preoccupied in the direct consequences of one's own action that the desirability is overlooked of passing beyond the narrow limits which encompass us, and of trying to ascertain the way in which that action strikes those who are concerned but in a secondary sense.

It would, therefore, seem important to make inquiry of those in a position to know how the educational and disestablishment debates perennially carried on in this country affect outsiders (especially our fellow-subjects, say, in India), and that from an important point of view, viz., of missionary effort.

These debates have disclosed many differences between the Church and dissenting bodies ; they have led to the use of strong language on the part of Nonconformist leaders ; they have elicited the opinion of many politicians that the State should have nothing to do with the teaching of religion to the children, or with the religious faith of the teachers in public elementary, or tax-aided, schools and colleges.

All this seems to indicate a substantial change

Our Unhappy Divisions

from the attitude assumed in dissenting circles in the past with reference to the all-important subjects of the religious instruction of the young, and with the attitude of the State towards religion. Thus, they are willing to face with equanimity the total suppression of Voluntary Schools.

The end at which their prominent leaders avowedly aim is the virtual secularization of public elementary schools. Practically, they profess themselves to be satisfied with ascertaining the competency of the teacher to impart secular instruction alone.

Is not all this likely to convey to the mind—say—of the cultivated Hindoo, Chinese, or Japanese the impression that the feeling in England in respect of Christianity is diminishing in strength and conviction?—that there is existent a sharp antagonism between the different exponents of Christian religious truth? Would not these therefore be likely to infer that the spirituality and sanctions of the Christian profession in England were weakening?

If it be so, is not this impression likely to react unfavourably upon such classes as have been mentioned, in respect of their acceptance of Christian truth—and to cause a fresh and notable impediment to Christian missions in all parts of the world?

There is a tendency on the part of English administrators, in India, in Egypt, and elsewhere, to minimize the fact that we are a Christian power, and, even somewhat ostentatiously, to

Our Unhappy Divisions—and

assume a position strictly neutral, where religious matters are concerned. To a large extent, this policy has failed in its object, forasmuch as a sincere Hindoo or Mohammedan expects and respects a firm profession of faith in regard to those with whom he deals, and is moreover fully capable of recognizing the nobleness of a consistent Christian life.

It is a notable fact that the Indian Mutiny was quelled by the action of leaders, many of whom—*e.g.*, the Lawrences, Colin Campbell, Havelock, &c.—were men of conspicuous piety ; and that the conflict was largely brought to a successful issue by the staunch adherence of native Christians to the English flag.

This fact furnishes an object-lesson, the significance of which cannot be overlooked. It would indeed appear to be directly addressed by the Almighty to the British nation.

It is but a few who could pretend to have such a knowledge of the mission field as to enable them to answer the query as to whether, or how far, the divergent opinions expressed on public platforms in England on educational and religious questions generally, are likely to affect the operations of our agents in the various foreign fields where they are labouring ; but, if there should be the least fear of such a calamitous result, may one not plead this danger (amongst other reasons) to the religiously-minded amongst our political opponents as an additional cause for inducing them to take a more charitable view of

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the persistence of Churchmen in affirming their views as to the union of Church and State and as to the absolute necessity for definite religious teaching in public elementary schools?

There cannot be a doubt that if the Church were disestablished and disendowed a serious blow would be struck both at her authority and efficiency; or that if the policy of the Liberal Government were pursued unchecked in our rate-aided schools, the nation would be advanced a considerable stage along the road to secularism.

It is disconcerting and humiliating to observe the apparently light-hearted manner in which Parliament—Lords as well as Commons—deal with such subjects as the Marriage Laws—the National Witness of the Nation to God—the Religious Education of intending teachers. It is time that the Church stood firm, and refused to allow that Statute Law should be capable of overriding Church Law, where the latter deals directly with subjects involving faith or morals. In that realm, it is the function and glory of the Church to bring it about that *vox populi* should be equivalent to *vox Dei*!

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